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The hermeneutics of knowing and willing in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas

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Publication date:
2013

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
O'Reilly, K. E. (2013). *The hermeneutics of knowing and willing in the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas*. [s.n.].

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KEVIN E. O'REILLY, O.P.

THE HERMENEUTICS OF KNOWING AND
WILLING IN THE THOUGHT OF
ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Ad I Cor</i>	<i>Lectura super Epistolam I ad Corinthios</i>
<i>Ad II Cor</i>	<i>Lectura super Epistolam II ad Corinthios. Reportatio</i>
<i>Ad Phil</i>	<i>Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Philipenses lectura</i>
<i>Ad Rom</i>	<i>Expositio super Epistolam ad Romanos</i>
<i>CEG</i>	<i>Contra Errores Graecorum</i>
<i>Comp Theol</i>	<i>Compendium Theologiae</i>
<i>De car</i>	<i>Quaestio disputata De caritate</i>
<i>De malo</i>	<i>Quaestiones disputatae De malo</i>
<i>De pot</i>	<i>Quaestiones disputatae De potentia</i>
<i>De rat fid</i>	<i>De rationibus fidei</i>
<i>De ver</i>	<i>Quaestiones disputatae De veritate</i>
<i>De virt</i>	<i>Quaestio disputata De virtutibus in communi</i>
<i>In De Div Nom</i>	<i>In De Divinis Nominibus</i>
<i>In Ethic</i>	<i>Sentencia libri Ethicorum</i>
<i>In Eph</i>	<i>Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Ephesios lectura</i>
<i>In Heb</i>	<i>Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Hebraeos lectura</i>
<i>In Gal</i>	<i>Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Galatas lectura</i>
<i>In Joh</i>	<i>Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura</i>
<i>In psalmos</i>	<i>In psalmos Davidis expositio</i>
<i>In Sent</i>	<i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi</i>
<i>In Sym. Ap.</i>	<i>Expositio in Symbolum Apostolorum</i>
<i>QD De anima</i>	<i>Quaestio disputata De anima</i>

<i>ScG</i>	<i>Summa contra Gentiles</i>
<i>SDA</i>	<i>Sentencia libri De anima</i>
<i>STh</i>	<i>Summa Theologiae</i>
<i>Super De Trinitate</i>	<i>Super Boetium De Trinitate</i>
	<i>In Octo Libros Physicorum Aristotelis (ch. 4)</i>

Other ancient and medieval authors

Aristotle

<i>NE</i>	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
<i>Politic</i>	<i>Politics</i>

St Augustine

<i>De Corrept. Et Grat.</i>	<i>De Correptione et Gratia</i>
<i>De Div Quaest</i>	<i>De Diversis Quaestionibus Octoginta Tribus</i>
<i>De Trin</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>
<i>Tract In Joh</i>	<i>In Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus</i>

St John Damascene

<i>De Fid Orth</i>	<i>De Fide Orthodoxa</i>
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Pseudo-Dionysius

<i>Div Nom</i>	<i>De Divinis Nominibus</i>
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Biblical books

Col	Colossians
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1 Cor	1 Corinthians
2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Dan	Daniel
Ec	Ecclesiastes
Eph	Ephesians
Heb	Hebrews
Is	Isaiah
Jn	John
1 Pet	1 Peter
2 Pet	2 Peter
Phil	Philippians
Prov	Proverbs
Ps	Psalms
Rom	Romans
2 Thess	2 Thessalonians
1 Tim	1 Timothy

INTRODUCTION

Hermeneutics, the idea that human understanding is conditioned by factors that lie beyond its control, has long since established itself as an important area of concern both in philosophy and theology, not least as a reaction to the universalist claims of Enlightenment rationalism.¹ Thomists to date have not displayed any great awareness of the historical and hermeneutical turns in philosophy and theology as represented by figures such as Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur.² There is therefore much work to be done in order to show forth those elements in Aquinas's work that can meaningfully engage with these turns. This lack in the world of exegetical scholarship on St. Thomas Aquinas and among Thomistic philosophers and theologians of a more speculative orientation furnishes the basic problem that this study aims to engage. In order to do so it undertakes the task of showing forth those elements in Thomas's major theological synthesis, namely the *Summa Theologiae*, that can take their place in contemporary theological debate that is conducted on a hermeneutical plane.

¹ For a clarification of the notion of "hermeneutics" see section one below.

² See, however, Kevin E. O'Reilly, "Transcending Gadamer: Towards a Participatory Hermeneutics," *The Review of Metaphysics* 65 (2012): 841-860, and "Objective Prejudice: St Thomas on the Elevation by Grace of the Life of Reason," *Angelicum* 84 (2007): 59-95, for two such attempts, philosophical and theological respectively. See also Reinhard Hütter, "The Directedness of Reasoning and the Metaphysics of Creation" in *Reason and the Reasons of Faith*, ed. Paul J. Griffiths and, Reinhard Hütter (NY and London: T & T Clark, 2005), 160-93. Although Hütter does not employ the term "hermeneutics," I contend that the theme is clearly operative in this article. For an important recent contribution in biblical hermeneutics, see Matthew Levering, *Participatory Biblical Exegesis: A Theology of Biblical Interpretation* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008).

My previous work in this area, which has focused on Hans-Georg Gadamer as a dialogue partner, has shown Thomas's construal of the relationship between the intellect and will to be central to the enterprise upon which I am about to embark. The will has an important influence on the unfolding of the life of human reason. In showing forth the elements in Thomas's theological synthesis that can enter into dialogue with contemporary hermeneutical concerns in theology it is therefore necessary to trace the dynamics of this relationship throughout the major thematic areas of the *Summa*, an undertaking that has not to my knowledge been undertaken previously. In this regard, the question arises as to whether any discernible relationships obtain between the various thematic areas of the *Summa* with regard to the dynamics of the relationship between intellect and will. There arises, furthermore, the question of the significance of these relationships. Thus, for example, an initial acquaintance with Thomas's doctrine concerning man as the image of God (*imago Dei*) and his Trinitarian theology reveal that intellect and will are ascribed analogically to God and to human beings. How does Thomas understand this relationship and what is its significance for human knowing and willing? In other words, what relevance does it have for Thomas's theological hermeneutics? Do the Incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit have a role to play in this regard? If so, what is this role and how is it to be understood? A superficial knowledge of the Catholic doctrine tells us that faith strengthens or elevates the intellect and that charity does likewise to the will. How does Thomas therefore construe the relationship between these two theological virtues, on the one hand, and what has in contemporary theological discourse become widely referred to as the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity?³ And how does this relationship cash out in terms of its implications for the dynamics of human knowing and willing and therefore for the

³ Chapter two will criticize these terms and suggest their replacement by *theologia* and *oikonomia* respectively.

hermeneutical enterprise? The same questions can be asked with regard to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Authority and tradition have a decisive role to play in the constitution of hermeneutical consciousness according to Gadamer, whose work forms a backdrop to the considerations of this present study. An initial familiarity with the faith obviously suggests the Church and the apostolic Tradition that she mediates to us as corresponding theologically to these categories. Thomas however develops neither an explicit ecclesiology nor an overt theology of Tradition. Is it possible nonetheless to extract elements of his thought that would contribute to a theological hermeneutics which would boast an ecclesiological component? If so, what are these elements and how do they fit in with the other elements of Thomas's overall hermeneutical – albeit implicitly – consciousness?

Certainly, no one to date has undertaken to bring out the hermeneutical consciousness implicit in Thomas's work.⁴ This work attempts to fill that lacuna. The extent of the undertaking, however, necessarily involves great risks: it is simply not possible to provide anywhere near an exhaustive treatment of the topics dealt with in each of the chapters. This shortcoming is unavoidable and criticisms in this regard would therefore be quite unfair. This work attempts to deal with a particular issue which links the various component parts of Thomas's overall theological vision as presented in the *Summa Theologiae*. Its focus is therefore global and in this respect differs from much scholarly work that is done on him,

⁴ As already intimated this work engages more recent developments in continental philosophy, particularly that of Gadamer, where the notion of hermeneutics is expanded beyond its traditional application to written texts to embrace the 'text' of life itself. In other words, this study is not concerned *per se* with Thomas's interpretation and use of Scripture (although his interpretation and use of Scripture do enter into its considerations), but rather with those factors connected with the life of Christian faith that condition the believer's perception of reality and the way his reasoning consequently unfolds.

work that engages with one or other specific area of his thought. While focusing on Thomas's own texts the present study nevertheless draws upon more detailed exegetical studies of the various themes discussed throughout in order that its macro-level exegesis not become divorced from the fruits of micro-level exegesis. The author is convinced, in keeping with the insights of contemporary hermeneutical theory, that the interplay between these two levels is of crucial importance and hopes that the insights of this study will be of help to those engaged in micro-level exegesis.

Having formulated the problem with which this study is concerned and a range of questions to which it seeks answers, it makes sense at this point to clarify more precisely the notion of hermeneutics as employed throughout this study before outlining the main lines of the argument that will be made.

1. The notion of hermeneutics: a clarification

In brief, the notion of hermeneutics which informs this work is drawn from Hans-Georg Gadamer's work, especially his *Truth and Method* and *Philosophical Hermeneutics*.⁵ In particular, the kind of interpretation in question in this study of St. Thomas is the interpretation of the text of life and of reality in general although what is argued for is applicable to the more restricted sense of hermeneutics as the interpretation of the written text. Especially significant is the fact that Gadamer's hermeneutics is ontological rather than methodological. As David E. Linge explains this significance in his introduction to Gadamer's *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, "It seeks to throw light on the fundamental conditions that underlie the phenomenon of understanding in all its modes, scientific and unscientific alike, and that constitute understanding as an event over which the interpreting

⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Continuum, 2004); and, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. by David E. Linge (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2008).

subject does not ultimately preside.”⁶ Translating this idea into the context of this study of St. Thomas’s theology means that hermeneutics in its ontological construal is concerned with those influences beyond our knowing and willing that enter into and condition the acts of intellect and will and that therefore shape the individual Christian’s understanding of reality. These influences obviously belong to the order of grace.

It would not be possible in the context of this study of Thomas’s thought to offer an exhaustive account of Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy nor would it be useful to do so in terms of elucidating the understanding of hermeneutics that is operative throughout the argument of this book. In what follows I will therefore simply outline a select number of ideas therein that are central to my understanding of the notion of hermeneutics, namely the ideas of prejudice, authority and tradition.

Gadamer famously asserts that all understanding involves some prejudice, a fact that “gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust.”⁷ Even the Enlightenment ideal of pure reason, capable of rendering a detached and neutral judgment on all things, does not escape the dynamics of prejudice. Indeed, it is in the grip of a particular kind of prejudice, namely “the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power.”⁸ Descartes furnishes us with a paradigm of this prejudice against prejudice in his rejection of all preceding philosophy and in his attempt to construct a system, characterized by a pursuit of clear and distinct ideas, on foundations established by him and without reference to anyone else.

The term ‘prejudice’ ought not to be taken as necessarily referring to a false judgment. Prejudices can have either a positive or a negative value. As Gadamer tells us,

⁶ Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, xi.

⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 272.

⁸ Ibid., p. 273.

“There are such things as préjugés légitimes.”⁹ The question arises however as to what criteria we can adduce in support of such legitimate prejudices. One might express this question otherwise: what are the criteria for optimal epistemic objectivity in this life? The answer given to this question in this study is expressed in purely theological terms since it is Thomas’s conviction that grace perfects nature and that it therefore elevates human understanding. For Thomas the life of grace, manifested in the theological virtues, is fundamental to the attainment of epistemic objectivity. The criteria for optimal objectivity in this life are therefore ultimately Trinitarian, Christological, Pneumatological and ecclesial.

Also central to my understanding of the hermeneutical task are the notions of authority and tradition, which notions are interrelated. Gadamer argues that it is hasty in the extreme to reject prejudices that have been handed down to us by tradition for they could well be true. As W. Jay Wood writes, moreover, “reliance on authorities other than oneself (apart from evidencing the virtue Aquinas called docility, or teachableness) does not require that we abandon our own reason, but just the reverse.”¹⁰ To accept the authority of another who communicates a tradition concerning intellectual or other matters itself constitutes a judgment of reason. At any rate, it is impossible to avoid the influence of tradition of one kind or another on our understanding. In this respect, Gadamer remarks: “That which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless, and our finite historical being is marked by the fact that the authority of what has been handed down to us – and not just what is clearly grounded – always has power over our attitudes and behavior.”¹¹

In my estimation, this aspect of Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy has profound significance for the articulating how the transmission of the Catholic faith throughout the last

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ W. Jay Wood, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Leicester: Apollos, 1998), p. 95.

¹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 281.

two millennia has shaped Catholic consciousness. For Thomas the faith has always been and continues to be preserved in its integrity by virtue of the fact that it is sanctified by the divine authority of the Holy Spirit. The creedal affirmations have been formulated by the universal Church who “cannot err, since she is governed by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of truth.”¹² Expressed otherwise, ecclesial authority, since it is rendered infallible by the authority of the Holy Spirit, guarantees the truth of the doctrines that pertain to the material object of the faith.¹³ It is reasonable to accept the faith as it has been handed down to us in the Church. Being immersed moreover in the ecclesial context of the transmission of the faith shapes our understanding of reality in a manner that is ontologically prior to particular acts of reason.

While my acquaintance with Gadamer’s hermeneutical philosophy has furnished one of the important sources for the interpretation of Thomas’s theology offered in this work, it would be erroneous in the extreme to think that I regard Thomas as being somehow or other a Gadamer *avant la lettre*, a fact that the preceding paragraph ought to have signalled. While the present study in no way intends to embark upon any kind of comparison between Thomas and Gadamer, it is no harm to point out that the hermeneutical theory implicit in Thomas’s corpus, particularly in the *Summa Theologiae*, differs radically from that of Gadamer in important respects. Thus, for example, Gadamer’s hermeneutics shuns any kind of theological grounding, which fact arguably betrays the influence of Luther’s rejection of philosophical theology.¹⁴ The hermeneutics implicit in Thomas’s work, in contrast, are ultimately theological although it would also be possible to derive elements of a purely

¹² *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 *sed contra*: “[N]on potest errare, quia spiritu sancto gubernatur, qui est spiritus veritatis.”

See also III, q. 66 a. 10 *sed contra*; and, *Quodlibet* IX, q. 8.

¹³ See ch. 6, section 2, for an explication of the notion of the material object of faith in Thomas’s theology.

¹⁴ For an elaboration of this point, see O’Reilly, “Transcending Gadamer,” n. 8, p. 843.

philosophical hermeneutics from it. Gadamer's writings, moreover, lack any systematic account of human nature. The only aspect of man that he discusses is his linguisticity.¹⁵ This sparse account stands in marked contrast to the whole treatise that Thomas devotes to human nature in the *Prima Pars* and to other material pertinent both to philosophical and to theological anthropology to be found elsewhere in the *Summa Theologiae*. The treatise on the passions (*STh* I-II, qq. 55-67) and the natural inclinations (*STh* I-II, q. 94, a. 2) are cases in point. Both the passions and the natural inclinations are fundamental to Thomas's ethical system and would form an integral part of an exhaustive hermeneutical theory claiming to derive its inspiration from him.

This book does not claim to offer an exhaustive elaboration of the hermeneutical dynamics implicitly operative in Thomas's thought. As the title suggests, my hermeneutical concerns here are limited to the faculties of intellect and will since they lay claim to a certain preeminence in Thomas's theological anthropology: man is made to the image and likeness of the Trinity in virtue of these faculties by which we can know and love God, which faculties are analogically and primarily ascribed to the Trinitarian God. The doctrine of man as *imago Dei* plays a pivotal role in the structure and argument of the *Summa Theologiae*. In this regard we encounter two intimately related kinds of analogy: analogy of likeness and analogy of conformation. The notion of the analogical likeness of the *imago Dei* which intrinsically orders him to know and to love God grounds the notion of analogy of

¹⁵ In his article, "Man and Language," Gadamer writes: "Aristotle established the classical definition of the nature of man, according to which man is the living being who has *logos*. In the tradition of the West, this definition became canonical in a form which stated that man is the *animal rationale*, the rational being, distinguished from all other animals by his capacity for thought. Thus is rendered the Greek word *logos* as reason or thought. In truth, however, the primary meaning of this word is language" Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 59.

conformation which relates to growth in the image and likeness of God. Analogy of likeness is related to analogy of conformation as anthropology to ethics. Crucially, the fact that for Thomas analogy of likeness grounds analogy of conformation means that the study of human action in the *Secunda Pars* is undeniably theological in tenor. His is no purely philosophical ethics. Indeed, as Leonard E. Boyle remarks, “By prefacing the *Secunda* or moral part with a *Prima pars* on God, Trinity and Creation, and then rounding it off with a *Tertia pars* on the Son of God, Incarnation and the Sacraments, Thomas put practical theology, the study of Christian man, his virtues and vices, in a full theological context.”¹⁶

Thomas’s elaboration of the doctrine of man as *imago Dei* therefore renders the hermeneutical dynamics implicit in Thomas’s thought clearly and indisputably theological in character. As the brief overview of the argument of this book in the next section indicates, moreover, the faculties of intellect and will that constitute man as *imago Dei* provide the thread that links all the chapters. Each of the chapters is concerned in its own way with one or other or both of these faculties.

2. A brief overview of the argument

Human beings are made to the image of the Trinity on account of their capacity for knowing and loving. This biblical assertion receives support from the metaphysical assumptions to which Thomas has recourse, namely the notion of participation and the idea that every effect bears the impress of its cause albeit, in this case, analogically. By virtue of its analogical likeness to God, the *imago Dei* is intrinsically ordered to knowing and loving God, an ordering that is perfectly realized in the beatific vision. Thomas also writes about the *imago Dei* in terms of analogy of conformation, that is to say, in terms of the idea that the

¹⁶ Leonard Boyle, *The Setting of the “Summa Theologiae” of Saint Thomas*, The Étienne Gilson Series 5 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983), p. 16.

moral life involves growing in the image and likeness of God. In fact the analogy of conformation aspect of the image is grounded in the analogy of likeness aspect. Much of this study is in fact concerned with the former for it pertains to the perfection of the capacities for knowing and loving God.

While chapter one is concerned with human beings who are made to the image of God on account of their possession of the faculties of intellect and will, chapter two concerns itself with the Trinitarian God to Whose image we are made. It examines what it means to ascribe the capacity for knowing and loving to the triune God. This ascription is analogical, the primary instantiation of the analogy being the Trinitarian God. The image is perfected insofar as it participates in God's own knowing and loving. This perfection of the image would however not be possible without the creative and salvific work of the triune God in the *oikonomia*, that is to say, it requires that God reach out to us in grace. This 'reaching out' takes place in the visible and invisible missions of God's very own Word and Love, that is to say, in the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit. The Trinitarian missions grant human knowing and willing a participation in the Trinity's inner life of knowing and loving. The chapters that deal with Thomas's Christology (chapter 4), his teaching on grace (chapter 5), his doctrine concerning faith (chapters 6 and 7) and charity (chapters 8 and 9) in effect have as their subject matter the perfection of the *imago Dei* by participation in life of knowing and loving proper to the triune God.

Prior to dealing with the graced action of God in perfecting man whom He has made to His own image, we turn in chapter three to the human faculties of intellect and will that are intrinsic to the perfection of the image. This chapter highlights the relationship of dynamic reciprocity that obtains between intellect and will. The spiritual activity of man unfolds according to the dynamics of a complex interaction between the intellect and the will whereby the intellect informs the act of the will while the will imparts direction to the

trajectory of reason. In other words, the life of mind involves a synthesis of knowledge and love according to which the intellect specifies the act of the will and the will influences the direction in which the life of reason unfolds. There can be no such thing as ‘pure’ reason, that is to say, reason that is detached from the influence of human willing. By the same token, the act of the will is always specified by the intellect. The complex dynamic interaction between intellect and will colours one’s interpretation of reality. Hence the application of the notion of hermeneutics to Thomas’s construal of the relationship between intellect and will. One’s interpretation of reality is enhanced or undermined according to the extent to which it is informed both by right understanding and reasoning, on the one hand, and right willing, on the other hand.

The question arises in the light of the foregoing discussion whether it is possible to adduce any criteria that secure the moorings of objectivity. Chapter four argues for an affirmative answer to this question: the fundamental criterion for epistemic objectivity is furnished by conformation of one’s knowing and willing to the example and teaching of Christ. In Christ the Word has assumed human nature. Imitation of Christ (*imitatio Christi*) consequently entails the conformation of knowing and willing to the Word, to the eternal concept of God’s Wisdom. Imitating Christ’s example thus assimilates the believer to the life of the Trinity. In being conformed to Christ the disciple’s knowing and willing is shaped by all the mysteries of Christ’s life, including the cross. The cross in fact imparts a distinctive quality to human knowing and willing, making the believer seem foolish in the eyes of a purely worldly understanding of reality. In other words, formation of one’s knowing and willing according to the example of Christ possesses a hermeneutical significance, given the dynamics of interinvolvement between intellect and will. The dynamics of a Christologically formed knowing and willing manifests itself, for example, in the believer’s attitude towards created goods.

Imitation of Christ's example is not simply the imitation of an external exemplar. Thomas tells us that we enter into spiritual contact with what we imitate "through faith and charity and the sacraments of faith."¹⁷ We are drawn into the life of the very mysteries that we imitate. Expressed otherwise, the mysteries of Christ's life are virtually present by grace to all men in all places and at all times. This virtual presence is effected by the divine efficient causality which is inseparable from the imitation of the mysteries of Christ's life by the believer. *Imitatio Christi* is in fact an expression of the presence of God's grace – by which grace the concept of eternal Wisdom (by Whom God knows Himself and all things and through Whom He has created all things) deepens our participation in His Wisdom and assimilates the *imago Dei* to the Trinitarian life of knowing and loving. Grace thus bears a Christological impress.

Reflecting the grammar of the inner life of the Trinity, however, Thomas generally discusses grace in relation to the operation of the Holy Spirit. Just as in proceeding from the Son (as well as from the Father) the Holy Spirit receives everything that the Son is, so too in the *oikonomia*, being sent by the Son (as well as by the Father) He communicates the fullness of the Son's being to us. In so doing, He configures us to the Son. Grace is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul configuring the believer to Christ. The theological virtues and the other infused virtues, Gifts, beatitudes, and fruits of the Holy Spirit are a function of grace. They presuppose the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul leading us to the Son by configuring us to Him. In introducing the theological virtues and the other infused virtues, as well as the Gifts of the Holy Spirit chapter five begins an exposition of the dynamics of assimilation to the Son through the action of the Holy Spirit. The remaining chapters expound

¹⁷ *STh* III, q. 49 a. 3 ad 1: "[P]er fidem et caritatem, et per fidei sacramenta."

these dynamics at greater length with regard to the theological virtues of faith and charity as well as to the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, counsel, and wisdom.

Two chapters are devoted to the theological virtue of faith. The first of these, chapter six, deals with the objective reference of the act of faith in both its formal and material aspects and with the role of the Church here on earth in ensuring the truth of the material object of faith. The formal object of faith is God as First Truth. The First Truth however transcends the powers of human cognition to grasp. The object of faith needs to be proportioned to the capacity of human cognition – hence its propositional nature. Here we encounter an instance of the general principle that what is received is received according to the mode of being of that which receives.¹⁸ It is precisely in being proportioned to the cognitional capacity of humans that the articles of faith bring the believer into spiritual contact with the reality that they express. They mediate God’s very own Truth to the believer and in this way elevate his capacity for knowing beyond what is possible for the intellect unaided by grace. Faith strengthens the intellect with God’s own Truth.

Chapter six also deals with the development of dogma throughout the course of the centuries. In this regard Thomas maintains that the substance of the articles of faith does not change for what is believed in later ages is implicitly contained in the faith of those who lived in earlier times. The integrity of the faith throughout the ages and in the course of its development is vouchsafed by the fact that the Church is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Since the articles of faith furnish the first principles of graced reason’s operation, Thomas’s ecclesiology arguably possesses a hermeneutical significance. In brief, the Church constitutes the locus in which the Holy Trinity preserves the conditions for optimal intellectual objectivity.

¹⁸ *STh* I, q. 79 a. 6: “Quod enim recipitur in aliquo, recipitur in eo secundum modum recipientis.” See also *STh* I, q. 89 a. 4; *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 2; *STh* III, q. 54 a. 2 ad 1; *De ver* q. 2 a. 2 ad 5; *De ver* q. 20 a. 4 ad 1.

Following on from chapter six, which deals in part with the objective reference of the act of faith, chapter seven turns to a consideration of the epistemic transformation wrought in the individual believer by faith as well as by the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, and counsel. Faith orders us towards our supernatural end, namely Beatitude. It bestows upon us a participation in the divine life so that eternal life can be said to begin in this life before being completed in the next. In other words, faith establishes in us the reality of final Beatitude, albeit in an inchoate manner. The full realization of Beatitude in the next life exists in us in potency in this present life. In commenting on St Paul's description of faith as the "*substance of things to be hoped*"¹⁹ Thomas explains the notion of ultimate Beatitude existing in us in potency in the present life by analogy with the first principles of science: just as the whole of science is virtually contained in the first principles, so too faith virtually contains all things to be hoped for.

Thomas also employs the analogy of the first principles of science in order to explicate the notion of increase in faith. This increase in faith is related to an increase in the understanding and knowledge of the articles of faith, which understanding and knowledge count among the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. These Gifts primarily regard speculative matters but relate by extension to practical affairs. The Gift of understanding principally confers a deeper intellectual penetration of the articles of faith while the Gift of knowledge bestows right judgment with regard to the ordering of finite goods in relation to ultimate Beatitude. This judgment is however theoretical and does not therefore grant the ability to reason correctly concerning the means that ought to be adopted in order to attain these goods – hence the need for a further Gift, namely the Gift of counsel. The Gift of counsel corresponds to the virtue of prudence, the end of which is established by rectitude of will.

¹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1: "[E]st autem fides substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium."

Discussion of the Gift of counsel leads into the final two chapters, chapters eight and nine, which examine Thomas's teaching concerning charity, for the rectitude of will required in order to be directed towards ultimate Beatitude can be imparted only by the theological virtue of charity. In focusing on faith in chapter seven we largely bracket a consideration of charity. It is important to be clear however that in speaking of faith we have in mind living faith, that is to say, faith that is informed by charity. Charity, which is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul, carries the human intellect into the realm of divine Wisdom. The Gift of wisdom, which is infused along with charity, confers on human reason the ability to judge aright with regard to divine things and, in the light of divine things, to judge aright concerning human matters. Since charity is the cause of wisdom, increase of charity brings about increase of wisdom, that is to say, greater charity entails perceptions and judgments that are increasingly conformed to the divine mind. This conformation furnishes the criterion for objectivity in human knowing and willing, where objectivity is understood, as explained in the section 4 below, as the objectivization of subjectivity. Conformation to Christ through the Holy Spirit is the key to the highest form of epistemic objectivity possible in this life. Expressed otherwise, the epistemic objectivity that is the fruit of the objectivization of subjectivity can also be said to be the fruit of the divinization of the epistemic agent. Conformation to Christ through the Holy Spirit is the basis for what can be termed an objective hermeneutics of knowing and loving, without committing the error of positing a dichotomy between subject and object.

From the foregoing overview of the argument of this book it ought to be evident that it is concerned mainly with the *nexus mysteriorum* in the *Summa Theologiae*. In other words, its various analyses attempt to bring out the interconnection of a range of themes in Thomas's work. This aspect of Thomas's work deserves a brief comment which we offer in the next section.

3. The *nexus mysteriorum* and Scripture

There is a coherence and comprehensiveness in Thomas's theology that goes well beyond his endeavour to treat systematically the whole of theological terrain, locus by locus. While his theology is certainly systematic in this genre-based understanding, it also engages the dynamics of a deeper sense of 'systematicity'. In describing this deeper sense, A. N. Williams writes: "Theology may in this sense be said to be systematic when it traces links between discrete theological loci, or when the treatment of a single locus or issue is shaped by awareness of its potential to interlock with other loci, indeed in some cases, its dependence on them for its own shape."²⁰ In the case of the present work Thomas's conception of reason is informed and shaped by its being embedded in the *nexus mysteriorum*. In order to understand the dynamics of reason as Thomas understands them in the *Summa* it is necessary to trace the connections between the treatment of intellect and will in the *Prima Pars* with other aspects of Christian doctrine discussed elsewhere throughout the *Summa*. In this regard I place Thomas's elaboration of the relationship between intellect and will in the context of his treatment of the doctrine of man as made to the image of the Trinity, his Trinitarian theology, his Christology and his teaching concerning grace as well as his discussions of the theological virtues of faith and charity and the corresponding Gifts of the Holy Spirit. I should mention here that I have taken the decision to limit my discussion of the theological virtues to those of faith and charity since they relate to the missions of the Son and of the Spirit that are discussed in the chapters on Christology and grace. Since an examination of Thomas's theology of hope would not add anything of significance to my argument and since

²⁰ A. N. Williams, *The Architecture of Theology: Structure, System and Ratio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 1.

such an examination would perhaps obscure my concern with the *nexus mysteriorum* I have deemed it best to omit such an examination altogether.

Recent scholarship has become more conscious of the way in which the *Summa Theologiae*, in which the *nexus mysteriorum* is systematized and elaborated, is inspired by Thomas's reading of Scripture.²¹ I unreservedly accept this understanding of how Thomas executed his theological task. Although the scope of this present study rules out dedicating a sustained argument in support of this reading of Thomas, its veracity ought to become evident as I refer to Thomas's Scriptural commentaries in order to exegete particular verses that he cites and to elucidate the various points under discussion. What we encounter in Thomas's use of Scripture is not mere proof-texting, that is to say, the citing of Scriptural texts in order to ornament an argument. Sacred Scripture rather constitutes the well-spring of his theological thinking.

While the foregoing comments concerning the *nexus mysteriorum* and Scripture ought to be uncontroversial – or at the very least will be rendered so in the course of the sustained argument of this book – there are some objections that should be faced at this stage. Answering these objections now will hopefully also forestall any unnecessary misunderstanding and confusion that might otherwise ensue as my argument unfolds.

4. Facing some initial objections

It might be objected that to claim that Thomas's conception of intellect/reason is, among other things, hermeneutical undermines the notion of objectivity in judging, that is to say, it introduces the spectre of relativism. In response it must be pointed out that for Thomas

²¹ On this point, see Christopher T. Baglow, "Sacred Scripture and Sacred Doctrine in Saint Thomas Aquinas," in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating and John Yocum (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), pp. 1-25, esp. pp. 14-16.

human reason participates in the divine reason through whose Word all things were created. The divine Word, therefore, furnishes the rule and measure of created things. Consequently, the objectivity of human judgment depends on the degree to which reason is conformed to the Word. We are conformed to the Word by grace, that is to say, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Since both the Word and the Spirit are sent by the Father, it follows that the ultimate criterion of objectivity can be described interchangeably as Christological, Pneumatological, and Trinitarian. I will argue that it is also ecclesial.

The contention that the dynamics of reason in Thomas's thought are hermeneutical might give rise to an objection similar to the one above, namely that we are denying that reason is capable of apprehending universal truth. It must be stated emphatically at the outset that such is not a position to which this book subscribes. Thomas's corpus bears eminent witness to the metaphysical range of reason. His proofs for the existence of God at *STh* I, q. 2 a. 3 are a case in point. In Thomas's work we observe a conception of rationality that is in fact both capable of apprehending universal truth and hermeneutical, a fact that is made possible by and is predicated upon the relationship of mutual interaction between intellect and will described in chapter three.²² In recognizing this interaction, Thomas rejects any compartmentalization of these faculties while at the same time refusing to confuse their operations. In this way he avoids the extremes of an ahistorical and universalist reason, on the one hand, and the perspectivism of a historically embedded reason, on the other hand. It is necessary to highlight this point at the outset given that this study focuses on the hermeneutical aspect of reason.

Throughout this work I employ the term "objective," a term that the reader might well consider to be out of place. It might be objected that it is more at home in the dichotomous

²² In this regard see also O'Reilly, "Transcending Gadamer," pp. 841-860.

thinking about subject and object that is overcome and rejected by hermeneutical awareness.²³ Contrary to this erroneous understanding it must be asserted that Thomas does indeed transcend dichotomous thinking about subject and object by virtue of his appropriation of the Scholastic notion of intentional being (*esse intentionale*). This notion, in the words of S. J. McGrath, “makes possible the identity of the knower and the known in the act of knowledge.”²⁴ The mode of existing of intentional being is nevertheless informed not only by the dynamics of the knowing subject but also by the structure of the object known. While the mode of existing of intentional being therefore transcends that of either subject or object it is nonetheless shaped by them. In so far as the contours of intentional being are shaped by the structure of the intentional object rather than by the subjective concerns of the knower, it can to that extent be said to be objective. One might say that the subjectivity of the

²³ This overcoming of the dichotomy between subject and object is already present in the later Husserl who traces back all intentional acts, in the words of S.J. McGrath, “to an absolute horizon of transcendental subjectivity, a field of transcendental experience within which subject and object, self and other, are originally constituted” (S. J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy: Phenomenology of the Godforsaken* [Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006], p. 64). Richard Kearney describes Husserl’s phenomenological method in *The Logical Investigations* as follows: “By leading us ‘back to the things themselves’ (*zu den Sachen selbst*) as they first become manifest to us, prior to the ‘objectifying’ constructions of our conceptual judgements, phenomenology aims to demonstrate how the world is an *experience which we live* before it becomes an *object which we know* in some impersonal or detached fashion. The most decisive manoeuvre of phenomenology was therefore to relocate the primary point of contact between man and world, that original relation which precedes the conventional separation of our experience into the opposite poles of subject and object. The *phenomenon* upon which Husserl strives to redirect our philosophical attention is precisely this experiential interface or midpoint where subject is primordially related to object and object is primordially related to subject” (Richard Kearney, *Modern Movements in European Philosophy* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986], p. 13).

²⁴ Ibid, p. 62

intending subject has been to that extent “objectivized” by the structure of the intentional object. Hence the idea expressed above that conformation to Christ through the Holy Spirit is the basis for a hermeneutics of objectivity, according to which hermeneutics the intellectual and volitional faculties of the epistemic agent are formed analogically so as to reflect in a human mode the dynamics of the inner life of the Trinity. As a consequence of this analogical formation the human agent comes to view reality increasingly in the light of its divine source and in a manner analogous to that of its divine source.

In response to this clarification it might be further objected that the Scholastic notion of *esse intentionale* is concerned with the cognition of a limited range of objects and that purely intentional structures such as history and culture are foreign to it. One can however readily concede this point because it does not preclude a creative application of Thomas’s teaching about intentional being to purely intentional structures. Such an application is implicit in this teaching. Thus can one apply to Thomas the following comment made by McGrath with regard to the Aristotelian-Scholastic treatment of intentional being in general: “From an Aristotelian-Scholastic perspective, the intentional order is the field of basic human experience.”²⁵

The author of this work is as much subject to the hermeneutical dynamics that are described in this work as is anyone else. In forging the interpretation of St. Thomas’s work laid out in the following pages, I have of course been influenced by a wide array of sources. Before embarking upon an extended argument in support of the contention that Thomas’s construal of reason is intrinsically hermeneutical it might be helpful for the reader to know something concerning these influences.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 66.

5. The hermeneutical influences operative in this work

The first influence that comes to mind is the writings of St. John of the Cross. Prior to ever having had any contact with the thought of St. Thomas, I had read the works of St. John of the Cross several times as well as various commentaries thereupon. I knew from the secondary literature that St. John had formulated his account of the spiritual life within a Thomistic framework. More precisely, the opening six questions of the *Prima Pars Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae* provided the basic structure in terms of which St. John of the Cross expounded his spiritual doctrine.²⁶ Essentially, the teaching of both St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross concerning the journey of the soul towards union with God – achieved in the beatific vision in the next life and by faith and love in this life – is the same. In effect, my reading of St. John of the Cross has enabled me to discern more clearly the underlying spiritual dynamics in St. Thomas’s theological enterprise.

I have long been fascinated in particular by the intellectual illumination entailed by the Christian mystical ascent, that is to say, by the “clarity of reason”²⁷ that the purgations of the spiritual ascent produce. In effect, the reading of St. Thomas offered in this work aims to show forth this fundamental dynamic of his theological work, a dynamic which would be inconceivable, moreover, unless Thomas had experienced the reality that he describes in theoretical terms. As will become apparent in the course of this study, however, the intellectual enlightenment occasioned by growth in union with the Holy Trinity is simply predicated upon and a continuation of the transformation in one’s understanding of reality that is wrought by the life of faith, hope and charity common to all believers. It does not

²⁶ For a detailed discussion of this point, see Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1951), pp. 96-101.

²⁷ Saint John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, trans. by E. Allison Peers (Kent: Burns and Oates, 1987), III, 20 [2].

constitute a reality apart from that experienced by other mere mortals. Thomas's vision of the spiritual life is a unified one.

A second influence on my reading of St. Thomas, an influence which ought to be evident at this point, comes from contemporary hermeneutical philosophy, particularly that of Hans-Georg Gadamer. Interestingly, an important source for Gadamer's own hermeneutical reflections in his *Truth and Method* is Book VI of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here we encounter an obvious point of contact between Thomas and Gadamer, one that clearly suggests resources in Thomas's intellectual corpus that enable us to put him into fruitful dialogue with contemporary hermeneutical thought. Elsewhere, with Thomas's thought as the focus of attention, I have treated philosophically the way in which one's virtue or lack thereof affects one's moral and aesthetic vision.²⁸ I have also previously broached this issue from a theological perspective.²⁹ In this present work, certain themes that I have dealt with previously reappear, particularly those of authority and tradition, themes that are so central to Gadamer's concerns. These themes however receive a much more prolonged and in-depth treatment here than in my earlier studies. Indeed, in these pages I go well beyond what I have achieved elsewhere. As will become apparent, while Thomas does not broach the themes of authority and tradition very often, they nonetheless furnish an important underlying dynamic in the unfolding of his thought.

The themes of authority and tradition also receive important treatment in the work of Alasdair MacIntyre, albeit in a different context, namely that of virtue. Like many other scholars, I have taken great delight in the renewed interest in virtue – albeit not without some

²⁸ See "The Vision of Virtue and Knowledge of the Natural Law in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas," *Nova et Vetera* 5 (2007), pp. 41-65; "St. Thomas's Moral Psychology and the Rejection of *Humanae Vitae*," *Nova et Vetera* 6 (2008), pp. 837-56; and, *Aesthetic Perception*.

²⁹ "Objective Prejudice," pp. 59-95; and, again, *Aesthetic Perception*.

serious reservations.³⁰ In particular, the influence that virtue and vice exert on one's vision of moral reality has interested me for a long time. In this regard the most important contribution to my own thinking has come from Tomás-Luis Caldera's magisterial *Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*,³¹ in my estimation the best treatment to date of the notion of knowledge through inclination/connaturality.

This study is negatively inspired by a heavily philosophical presentation of St. Thomas by some writers who purport to be engaging in moral theology. Jean Porter's *The Recovery of Virtue* is a case in point.³² Herwi Rikhof expresses the reservations that a scholar of Thomas's works might well hold in the face of this kind of presentation when he points out that "Porter dedicates a whole chapter to the affective virtues, a whole chapter to justice ... and half a chapter to prudence. She spends only three pages on the theological virtues."³³ A similar criticism can be levelled against Porter's *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law*,³⁴ allowing for the fact that it is not meant to offer straightforward exegesis of Thomas's thought. The text is overwhelmingly philosophical with a systematic treatment of grace appearing only the last section of the final chapter – just over twenty-one pages in a book running to almost four hundred pages. Thomas's Trinitarian theology and his

³⁰ See Kevin E. O'Reilly, "From Medieval Voluntarism to Hursthouse's Virtue Ethics," *The Thomist* 73 (2009), pp. 621-646; and "Anscombe on a Law Conception of Ethics and the Experience of Obligation," *The Heythrop Journal* 51 (2010), pp. 208-213.

³¹ Tomás-Luis Caldera, *Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris : Vrin, 1988).

³² Jean, Porter *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Westminister: John Knox Press, 1990).

³³ Herwi Rikhof, "Theological Virtues and the Role of the Spirit: Some Explorations," *Jaarboek 1999 Thomas Instituut Utrecht* 19 (2004), pp. 9-10.

³⁴ Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambriedge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans).

Christology do not enter in any significant way into the fabric of Porter's ethical deliberations. This kind of approach ignores the highly synthetic nature of Thomas's thought. As Pamela M. Hall correctly points out in relation to the *Summa*, its "structure ... dialectical in nature, hinges on the relationship and interdependence of its many parts."³⁵ Thomas's Trinitarian theology and Christology as well as his treatment of the theological virtues and Gifts of the Holy Spirit are surely important parts in the overall structure of the *Summa*.

In the wider world of Catholic moral theology there has been in recent times a tendency on the part of some theologians to question what John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* describes as the "intrinsic and unbreakable bond between faith and morality."³⁶ In critiquing Joseph Fuch's distinction between the transcendent and categorical levels of Christian ethics, a distinction that "results in their practical separation," Servais Pinckaers, O.P., writes:

The distinction, as commonly understood, precludes the possibility of showing how what is specifically Christian penetrates and operates in concrete actions, in areas regulated by virtues and particular norms, or how faith and charity, notably, are practical virtues, capable of assuming and transforming both virtues and human values. The overriding concern seems to be to guarantee their autonomy in relation to Christian data. A Christian spirituality may be accepted, even recommended, but it cannot intervene in regard to norms of concrete, categorical action.³⁷

³⁵ Pamela M. Hall, *Narrative and the Natural Law: An Interpretation of Thomistic Ethics* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1994), p. 23.

³⁶ *Veritatis Splendor* 4.

³⁷ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Noble, O.P. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), p. 102.

A further impulse for my way of reading Thomas is the paradigm of secular reason that is regularly proposed as the only paradigm acceptable for engagement in the public square. Gadamer famously asserts that all understanding involves some prejudice, a fact that “gives the hermeneutical problem its real thrust.”³⁸ The Enlightenment ideal of pure reason, capable of rendering a detached and neutral judgment on all things, does not escape the dynamics of prejudice. Indeed, it is in the grip of a particular kind of prejudice, namely “the prejudice against prejudice itself, which denies tradition its power.”³⁹ The term “prejudice” however ought not to be taken as necessarily referring to a false judgment, a point we have already encountered: prejudices can have either a positive or a negative value. As we have already seen Gadamer state, “There are such things as préjugés légitimes.”⁴⁰ The spirit of Enlightenment rationalism has led to the discrediting of prejudices in favour of the ideal of scientific knowledge which claims to exclude them. In this context faith and reason have come to be opposed to each other, faith-inspired reason being viewed as the source of irrational prejudice that ought in no way to be allowed a voice in the public square. In effect, this opposition to the expression of faith-inspired reason in the public square extends to arguments that are couched in purely philosophical terms but which nevertheless concur with Catholic teaching, particularly with regard to matters sexual and bioethical, and which therefore run counter to the cherished convictions of the liberal establishment.

The argument elaborated in the chapters that follow is not meant directly as an answer to proponents of secular rationality. As already indicated, it elaborates an interpretation of Thomas’s theology in dialogue with other scholars. Nevertheless, if the argument is correct then one must perforce conclude that objective judgment in ethics, politics, and aesthetics –

³⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 272.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 273.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

that is to say, the judgment posited by one who has been conformed to Christ by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – is ultimately the preserve of Catholic reason. The basis for this contention is the doctrine that man is created in the image of God on account of his possession of the faculties of intellect and will whereby he has the capacity to know and to love God. On this basis one can argue that humans are ontologically constituted in such a way that the most exalted exercise of moral and political reason belongs to those animated by Catholic faith and charity, which virtues elevate intellect and will respectively. Thomas's doctrine concerning man as *imago Dei* is clearly foundational to the argument I wish to make.

Finally, the interpretation forged in this study owes much to my engagement with other scholars. This study is concerned almost exclusively with an interpretation of Thomas's texts. The interpretation that I argue for parts company in various respects with that offered by other scholars of note. Thus, for example, I cannot accept what I deem to be an overly philosophical construal of Thomas's thought by Jean Porter; I differ with D. Juvenal Merriel with regard to his reading of *STh* I, q. 92, which deals with the notion of man as made to the image of the Trinity; and I reject Karl Rahner's depiction of the Thomist Trinitarian theology as being isolated from the rest of the total *nexus mysteriorum*. Nevertheless, as the reader will discover, I also endorse wholeheartedly the interpretations of various aspects of Thomas's thought offered by a range of scholars – most notably Matthew Levering, Gilles Emery, O.P., Servais Pinckaers, O.P., Herwi Rikhof, Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., and Tibor Horvath, S.J. To these scholars in particular I owe a huge debt of gratitude. Both they – and indeed those with whom I disagree – have contributed to the shaping of my own hermeneutical consciousness.

CHAPTER I

TO THE IMAGE OF THE TRINITY

The biblical notion of the creation of humans in the image of God has fascinated theologians from the earliest times on account of the key it provides for understanding the relation of human beings to God. The central text in this regard is Genesis 1:26: “Let us make man to our own image and likeness” (which in the Vulgate reads: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*). Inspired by this verse and by St. Paul’s references to the image of God, the Fathers of the Church frequently expounded this doctrine.¹ In their work, as Michael A. Dauphinais puts it, “The teaching of the image of God in humans was placed within the overall drama of salvation, which included both creation and redemption, thus forging a unity within the narrative that has too often been forgotten.”²

Following in the footsteps of the Fathers, St. Thomas made the concept of man as the image of God a key one in his thought. His understanding of the concept developed throughout the course of his theological career, a point well established by D. Juvenal Merriell in his discussion of Thomas’s treatment of this theme in the *Scriptum*, the *De Veritate*, and the *Summa Theologiae*.³ In this chapter the focus is on Thomas’s most mature teaching as

¹ See, for example, St Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, html edition: <http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/athanasius/incarnation/incarnation.p.htm>; and St Augustine, *De Trinitate*, html edition: <http://www.augustinus.it/latino/trinita/index2.htm>

² Michael A. Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God: The *Imago Dei* in Saint Thomas Aquinas,” *The Thomist* 63 (1999), p. 241.

³ D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas’ Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990). The indebtedness of the next section of this chapter to Merriell’s study ought to be evident.

elaborated in the *Summa*, the import of which Merriell characterizes in these words: “[T]he *Summa* sets the doctrine of the image in relation to other areas of theology, revealing its important place in the systematic organization Thomas gave to the science of *sacra doctrina*.”⁴ It is precisely the broad vision of the *Summa* that afforded Thomas the opportunity to develop a more coherent and complete exposition of the doctrine of the human being as the image of God or image of the Trinity than is to be found in his preceding works.⁵

These two expressions ‘image of God’ and ‘image of the Trinity’ refer to one and the same reality in the rational creature. Since God is a Trinity of Persons, the ‘image of God’ necessarily implies the ‘image of the Trinity.’ However, just as it is possible to think about God while bracketing any consideration about the Trinity of Persons, so also can the image of God be considered in isolation from the image of the Trinity. Thomas normally refers to the image of the Trinity only when the Trinitarian aspect of the image is his explicit focus but he nonetheless in no way intends any real distinction between the image of God and the image of the Trinity.⁶ The focus in this chapter is man as the image of the Trinity. References to man as the image of God are dictated by Thomas’s usage in particular texts.

It is clear that Thomas’s grasp of Augustine, his primary patristic source on this topic, is more penetrating, subtle, and nuanced in the *Summa* than in previous works. His stance concerning this doctrine proves to be more deeply Augustinian than in earlier writings, in spite of suggestions to the contrary. The view that in the *Summa* Thomas moves beyond his earlier Augustinian understanding of the image of God because of his increasing reliance on

⁴ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 153.

⁵ According to J.-P. Torrell, O.P., the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* was composed between 1266 and 1268 (*Saint Thomas Aquinas: vol. 1, The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal [Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995], pp. 142-146).

⁶ See Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 11.

Aristotelian psychology must be rejected.⁷ Another crucial influence, often passed over, is that of John Damascene from the Eastern tradition, to whom Thomas owes the insight that “man is said to be made to God’s image, in so far as the image implies *an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement*.”⁸ As Dauphinais observes, Aquinas takes from Augustine, on the one hand, “the theme that the image of God is in humans insofar as we turn, or area capable of turning, toward God in knowledge and love.” He takes from John Damascene, on the other hand, “the theme that the image of God is in humans insofar as we have understanding, free-will, and creative power (*per se potestativus*).”⁹ As Dauphinais illustrates, Aquinas combines the Latin tradition of Augustine and the Eastern tradition of John Damascene in order to develop the moral significance of the image of God in humans.¹⁰

In this chapter it is proposed in the first place to expound, in the light of Merriel’s exegesis, Thomas’s focused discussion of the doctrine of man as the image of God at *STh* I, q. 93. Two elements which characterize the image of God in humans come to the fore in this

⁷ For an exponent of this erroneous view see, for example, Marie-Joseph Serge de Laugier de Beaureceuil, “L’homme image de Dieu selon Thomas d’Aquin,” *Etudes et Recherches* 8 (1952), pp. 45-82 and 9 (1955), pp. 37-97, cited in Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity*, pp. 5-6. This view is encapsulated in the following words by David Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1973), pp. 125-26: “In spite of all that is noble in the teaching of Aquinas on the divine image in man, it is clear that here we are moving far more in the world of Aristotle than in the world of Christ, with His gospel of the kingdom and fatherhood of God.”

⁸ *STh* I-II, prol.: “[H]omo factus ad imaginem Dei dicitur, secundum quod per imaginem significatur *intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum*.” I owe this insight to Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God.”

⁹ Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God,” p. 244. Dauphinais translates *per se potestativus* as ‘creative power’ rather than ‘self-movement’ (English Dominicans’ translation) or “man’s mastery over himself” (Blackfriars edition). See *ibid.*, n. 13.

¹⁰ See Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God.”

question, namely the likeness of analogy (drawn from Augustine) and the likeness of conformation (drawn from Damascene). These two elements are intimately linked to creation and salvation respectively. Just as the history of salvation presupposes creation, therefore, so too with respect to man as *imago Dei* does the likeness of conformation presuppose the likeness of analogy. The likeness of conformation, moreover, is realized within the context of the likeness of analogy just as salvation is grounded in creation. It should be noted also that creation provides the warrant for the analogous use of language: the intellect and will, whereby human beings are made to the image of the Trinity, are ascribed analogously to the Trinity and to human beings. Intellect and will as instantiated in the infinite and simple being of the Trinitarian God furnish the primary analogate in which the *imago Dei* participates according to its finite and composite mode of being as it works out its salvation.¹¹ Creation and salvation belong to different levels of discourse.

It will become apparent that the likeness of analogy and the likeness of conformation are intimately linked so that, while it is true that a greater weight is given to the former in this question dealing with “the end or term of man’s production,”¹² Thomas by no means neglects the latter. Merriell’s focus on *STh* I, q. 93, however, arguably does not allow him to afford the aspect of conformation in Thomas’s teaching the degree of attention that it merits since appreciation of this aspect requires a broader view of the *Summa*. Indeed, it is only in light of

¹¹ As A.N. Williams writes, “All other divine attributes (with the sole and notable exception of simplicity) are defined to at least some degree by infinity” (Williams, *The Architecture of Theology*, p. 8). At the same time, “Neither divine transcendence, nor simplicity, nor infinity necessarily stipulates the impotence of human reason or the impropriety of appeal to it, however, for it is only in virtue of the limited human mind’s ability to apprehend the notion that there is something radically unlike itself that we are able to assert these attributes of divine nature in the first place” (ibid., 9).

¹² *STh* I, q. 93, prol.: “Deinde considerandum est de fine sive termino productionis hominis, prout dicitur factus ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei.”

the broader sweep of the *Summa* that one can properly appreciate the dynamics of conformation at *STh* I, q. 93. Moreover, as Dauphinais argues, “by including John Damascene’s authority alongside that of Augustine, Aquinas transforms the teaching of the image of God so that it serves both as an entrance into the mystery of the Triune God and as a figure for the human progression in the moral life toward friendship with God.”¹³ An outline of the import of this Eastern influence constitutes the matter of section 2 below, entitled ‘Likeness of conformation.’

1. *STh* I, q. 93: human beings as made to the image and likeness of God

The notion of divine exemplarity suffuses Thomas’s doctrine concerning the image. Thus, for example, he writes: “Now it is manifest that in man there is some likeness to God, copied from God as from an exemplar.”¹⁴ In other words, human beings as the image of God bear the impress of their divine Creator. As Merriel writes, “God is in some sense the extrinsic formal cause of man, as the exemplar on which He has modeled man.”¹⁵ There obtains however an infinite distance between God as exemplar and the human being as copy. The likeness of the image to God certainly does not involve equality. Thus, while we can speak of the likeness of human beings to God, it is an imperfect likeness. Scripture implies this ontological fact “when it says that man was made *to* God’s likeness; for the preposition *to* signifies a certain approach, as of something at a distance.”¹⁶ Christ, the Son of God, in

¹³ Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God,” p. 244.

¹⁴ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1: “Manifestum est autem quod in homine invenitur aliqua Dei similitudo, quae deducitur a Deo sicut ab exemplari.”

¹⁵ Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 175.

¹⁶ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1: “Et hoc significat Scriptura, cum dicit hominem factum ad imaginem Dei, praepositio enim ad accessum quendam significat, qui competit rei distanti.”

contrast, reflects perfectly “that of which He is the Image, and so He is said to be the *Image*, and never *to the image*.”¹⁷

Thomas has recourse to analogy in order to underpin the idea of likeness between God and humans in spite of the infinite ontological chasm that separates them. An objection to the idea that the image of God is in human beings runs: “[T]here is no species common to both God and man; nor can there be a comparison of equality between God and man. Therefore there can be no image of God in man.”¹⁸ In response, Thomas argues that a thing can be said to be one “not only numerically, specifically, or generically, but also according to analogy or a kind of proportion.”¹⁹ It is according to analogy or to a certain proportion that humans are considered as one with God or like to Him. This analogy or proportion is in turn predicated upon creation: God, as Exemplar and Efficient Cause, has created the human person with a rational soul, in virtue of which he is called the image of God. Thomas repeats on several occasions throughout his treatment of humans as the image of God that what establishes them in this dignity is their intellectual nature:

[I]ntellectual creatures alone, properly speaking, are made to God’s image.²⁰

¹⁷ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1 ad 2: “[P]rimogenitus omnis creaturae est imago Dei perfecta, perfecte implens illud cuius imago est, et ideo dicitur imago, et nunquam ad imaginem.”

¹⁸ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1 *obj.* 3: “Sed non est species indifferens Dei et hominis; nec potest esse aequalitas hominis ad Deum. Ergo in homine non potest esse imago Dei.”

¹⁹ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1 ad 3: “Unum autem dicitur aliquid non solum numero aut specie aut genere, sed etiam secundum analogiam vel proportionem quandam.” My translation. for “secundum analogiam vel proportionem quandam.” The Christian Classics translation reads: “according to a certain analogy or proportion.”

²⁰ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 2: “[S]olae intellectuales creaturae, proprie loquendo, sunt ad imaginem Dei.”

First, we may consider in it [the image of God] that in which the image chiefly consists, that is, the intellectual nature.²¹

Since man is said to be to the image of God by reason of his intellectual nature, he is the most perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature.²²

The image of God, in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found in both man and in woman.²³

Thus, while in a broad sense every creature is an image of its exemplar in the divine mind, in the strict sense employed by Thomas “it implies a likeness in nature, that is, inasmuch as all things, as being, are like to the First Being; as living, like to the First Life; and as intelligent, like to the Supreme Wisdom.”²⁴ As Merriell writes, “The image is the unavoidable mark of God that every spiritual substance coming forth from the hand of God necessarily bears by virtue of the participatory communication of form that takes place in the act of creation.”²⁵

²¹ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 3: “Uno modo, quantum ad id in quo primo consideratur ratio imaginis, quod est intellectualis natura.”

²² *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4: “[C]um homo secundum intellectualem naturam ad imaginem Dei esse dicatur, secundum hoc est maxime ad imaginem Dei, secundum quod intellectualis natura Deum maxime imitari potest.”

²³ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4 ad 1: “[T]am in viro quam in muliere invenitur Dei imago quantum ad id in quo principaliter ratio imaginis consistit, scilicet quantum ad intellectualem naturam.”

²⁴ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 2 ad 4: “Sic autem non loquimur nunc de imagine, sed secundum quod attenditur secundum similitudinem in natura; prout scilicet primo enti assimilantur omnia, inquantum sunt entia; et primae vitae inquantum sunt viventia; et summae sapientiae, inquantum sunt intelligentia.”

²⁵ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 182.

By virtue of the act of creation, the image of God is ineradicably rooted in the nature of human beings.²⁶

There are three ways in which humans are said to be in the image God on account of their intellectual nature. First, the very nature of the mind, common to all humans, endows upon them a capacity to know and to love God. Secondly, grace allows them actually or habitually to know and to love God, albeit imperfectly. Thirdly, the perfection of the image of God in humans is achieved in the likeness of glory, when they know and love God perfectly. The threefold image of God in humans may be referred to as that of “*creation*, of *re-creation*, and of *likeness*.”²⁷ The first is found in all humans, the second is granted only to the just, while the third is conferred on the blessed alone. The second and third levels concern the conformation of the image to God according to grace and glory while this conformation exists in a potential mode at the level of nature. All three levels concern how humans, according to their intellectual nature, can best (*maxime*) imitate God insofar as “the intellectual nature imitates God chiefly in this, that God understands and loves Himself.”²⁸ Human acts of knowing and loving at the second and third levels are however increasingly specified by God as the object of these acts.

Merriell, in his exegesis, calls attention to the fact that these three levels of progress are rooted in human nature. Indeed, human nature requires this progress. This point is highly significant for it makes it clear that “the image of God is explicitly tied to the intellectual nature of man, and not directly to his operations.”²⁹ Of course, human beings imitate God’s

²⁶ See *ibid.*, pp. 238-39.

²⁷ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4: “Glossa distinguit triplicem imaginem, scilicet creationis, recreationis et similitudinis.”

²⁸ *Ibid.*: “Imitatur autem intellectualis natura maxime Deum quantum ad hoc, quod Deus seipsum intelligit et amat.”

²⁹ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 189.

eternal act of knowing and loving by acts of knowing and loving that move from potency to act. Thomas is nevertheless insistent that it is the intellectual nature that imitates God. Since the divine nature subsists in the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, we must also say that the image of God is in humans according to the Trinity of Persons. In his discussion of the divine Persons of the Trinity, Thomas shows how their distinction is consonant with the divine nature. It follows, therefore, that to be to the image of God by imitating the divine nature “does not exclude being to the same image by the representation of the Divine Persons.”³⁰ One follows from the other. In reasoning thus Thomas is of course aware that he is relying on the belief that God is a Trinity of Persons. It would not be possible to understand the triad in the mind as an image of the Trinity unless we first believed in the doctrine of three Persons in one God. In support of this position Thomas quotes Augustine: “*We see, rather than believe, the trinity which is in ourselves; whereas we believe rather than see that God is Trinity.*”³¹

Thomas’s exposition refers the reader to his earlier treatment of the distinction of the divine Persons according to relations of origin (*STh* I, qq. 27-28). In chapter two we will have occasion to examine this aspect of his Trinitarian doctrine in greater detail. This examination should serve to cast further light on his doctrine of man as the image of the Trinity. For the moment it suffices to state again that the foundation of the image of the Trinity in human beings is to be found in the acts of knowing and loving which reflect, according to their finite mode of being, the divine processions:

³⁰ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 5: “Unde esse ad imaginem Dei secundum imitationem divinae naturae, non excludit hoc quod est esse ad imaginem Dei secundum repraesentationem trium personarum.”

³¹ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 5 ad 3: “*Trinitatem quae in nobis est, videmus potius quam credimus, Deum vero esse Trinitatem, credimus potius quam videmus.*” Citation from *De Trin* XV 6.

[A]s the uncreated Trinity is distinguished by the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and of Love from both of these, as we have seen (Q. 28, A. 3); so we may say that in rational creatures wherein we find a procession of the word in the intellect, and a procession of the love in the will, there exists an image of the uncreated Trinity, by a certain representation of the species.³²

Following St. Augustine, Thomas states that the image of God receives its greatest expression in the acts of knowing and loving, acts that reflect the eternal processions of the Son as the Word of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit as the Love of the Father and Son. Thus, as Merriel writes, Thomas “conceived of the image of God as an ineradicable capacity for God in man, the foundation for man’s participation in the life of the divine Trinity to which man is called by God’s grace.”³³

It is important to note that for Thomas the image of the Trinity is to be found *principally* in the acts of the soul, that is to say, “inasmuch as from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love.”³⁴ It is precisely in these acts that the soul “approaches the nearest to a representation of the species

³² *STh* I, q. 93 a. 6: “[C]um increata Trinitas distinguatur secundum processionem verbi a dicente, et amoris ab utroque, ut supra habitum est; in creatura rationali, in qua invenitur processio verbi secundum intellectum, et processio amoris secundum voluntatem, potest dici imago Trinitatis increatae per quamdam repraesentationem speciei.” See also I, q. 45 a. 7 “Processiones autem divinarum personarum attenduntur secundum actus intellectus et voluntatis, sicut supra dictum est, nam filius procedit ut verbum intellectus, spiritus sanctus ut amor voluntatis. In creaturis igitur rationalibus, in quibus est intellectus et voluntas, invenitur repraesentatio Trinitatis per modum imaginis, inquantum invenitur in eis verbum conceptum et amor procedens.”

³³ Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 4.

³⁴ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 7: “[P]rout scilicet ex notitia quam habemus, cogitando interius verbum formamus, et ex hoc in amorem prorumpimus.”

of the divine Persons”³⁵ who are “distinct from each other by reason of the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and the procession of Love connecting both.”³⁶ The reason the image of the Trinity is constituted principally in the acts of the soul is that in the human soul a word requires actual thought. Secondarily, the image of the Trinity can be considered to exist in the powers and habits of the soul inasmuch as its acts are virtually contained therein just as everything exists virtually in its principle. This distinction between primary and secondary modes of the image of the Trinity in the human being furnishes the basis for what Merriell describes as “a dynamic movement towards the actualization of the image of God.”³⁷

The actualization of the image of the Trinity with us must however take account of a further crucial precision that Thomas introduces into his discussion, namely that “the image of God is found in the soul according as the soul turns to God, or possesses a nature that enables it to turn to God.”³⁸ Once again, Thomas’s reasoning has its point of departure in the need to find in the image of the Trinity in the soul “some kind of representation of species of the Divine Persons, so far as this is possible to a creature.”³⁹ He repeats the idea that the divine Persons are distinguished from each other according to the procession of the Word from the Speaker and of Love from both the Speaker and the Word. The Word in effect has as its object God’s own Self; likewise in the case of Love – its object is God Himself. God Himself specifies the acts by which the Word and Love proceed. It is this specification that

³⁵ Ibid.: “[M]axime accedit, prout possibile est, ad repraesentandum speciem divinarum personarum.”

³⁶ Ibid.: “Divinae autem personae distinguuntur secundum processionem verbi a dicente, et amoris connectentis utrumque.”

³⁷ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, 214.

³⁸ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 8: “Et sic imago Dei attenditur in anima secundum quod fertur, vel nata est ferri in Deum.”

³⁹ Ibid.: “Unde oportet quod imago divinae Trinitatis attendatur in anima secundum aliquid quod repraesentat divinas personas repraesentatione speciei, sicut est possibile creaturae.”

the image ought to instantiate in its own acts of knowing and loving. Thus, writes Thomas, “we refer the Divine image in man to the verbal concept born of the knowledge of God, and to the love derived therefrom.”⁴⁰ The image of God in humans is realized therefore insofar as the soul imitates God in the activities of knowing and loving God. The realization of the image therefore involves not a self-reflexive act but rather the conversion of the soul to God. As such, the ontological identity of man cannot be construed apart from the relationship constituted by the capacity to know and to love the divine Other.⁴¹

Following this important conclusion, Thomas explains that God can be the object of the mind in two ways, directly and immediately or indirectly and mediately. Thomas compares the mind’s reflection on itself to seeing the reflection of someone in a mirror. This self-presence however is not enough; it simply provides a basis for turning to and therefore for the objective presence of God. In support of this position, Thomas refers to the quotation from Augustine found in the *sed contra*: “*The image of God exists in the mind, not because it has a remembrance of itself, loves itself, and understands itself; but because it can also remember, understand, and love God by Whom it was made.*”⁴² As Merriell describes this position, “the mind’s objective self-presence is not a sufficient condition for the image of the Trinity unless it is understood as a pre-condition for the objective presence of God.”⁴³ Merriell also correctly observes that this argument shows forth the interdependence of the likeness

⁴⁰ Ibid.: “Attenditur igitur divina imago in homine secundum verbum conceptum de Dei notitia, et amorem exinde derivatum.”

⁴¹ On this point, see Thomas Hibbs, *Virtue’s Splendor: Wisdom, Prudence, and the Human Good* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 211-12.

⁴² *STh* I, q. 93 a. 8 *sed contra*: “[N]on propterea est Dei imago in mente, quia sui meminit, et intelligit et diligit se, sed quia potest etiam meminisse, intelligere et amare Deum, a quo facta est.”

⁴³ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 220.

according to analogy and the likeness according to conformation.⁴⁴ This point is clearly understood if we recall the first of the three ways in which the image of God is in humans, namely inasmuch as they “possesses a natural aptitude for understanding and loving God; and this aptitude consists in the very nature of the mind, which is common to all men.”⁴⁵ Again, as Merriell properly discerns, the basis for the analogical likeness between God and humans resides in human participation in God’s knowledge and love – another reason as to why there can be no opposition between the analogical and conformational elements in the doctrine of the image.⁴⁶

While it bears the impress of its Trinitarian origins, this image nevertheless always stands in need of perfection in this life. It is true that Thomas devotes little attention to this question in his discussion specially dedicated to the image of God in humans at *STh* I, q. 93. He does nevertheless broach the issue in the final article of this question where he deals with the distinction between likeness (*similitudo*) and image (*imago*). In other words, while the concept of analogy predominates throughout most of the question, towards the end there is a shift towards the notion of conformation. In this respect, Merriell overemphasizes the undoubted analogical focus of the discussion while concomitantly underplaying the conformational aspect. It is noteworthy that he affords relatively little space to a treatment of article 9: it receives less than half a page. Merriell does nonetheless recognize the import of Thomas’s deliberations: “The rational creature can never lose the image of God, but it may

⁴⁴ See *ibid.*, p. 221.

⁴⁵ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4: “[S]ecundum quod homo habet aptitudinem naturalem ad intelligendum et amandum Deum, et haec aptitudo consistit in ipsa natura mentis, quae est communis omnibus hominibus.”

⁴⁶ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 221. See also D. Juvenal Merriell, C.O., “Trinitarian Anthropology,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by Rik van Nieuwenhove and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2005), pp. 133-4.

bring the image to a higher degree of perfection by those operations that establish virtue in the creature.”⁴⁷

In his treatment of whether ‘likeness’ can be distinguished from ‘image’ Thomas notes that while likeness can be considered as a kind of preamble to image “inasmuch as it is something more general than image,”⁴⁸ it can also be regarded as subsequent to image “inasmuch as it signifies a certain perfection of image.”⁴⁹ In other words, the image of God in human beings is susceptible of higher degrees of perfection. This perfection, moreover, is predicated upon the life of virtue. In other words, the likeness that is a perfection of image depends on virtue or rather on the love of virtue, “for there is no virtue without love of virtue.”⁵⁰ The notion of man as made to the image of the Trinity as elaborated in the *Summa* must therefore not be viewed in static terms; rather, as Michael A. Dauphinais describes it, “it manifests the dynamic character of the relation of the human creature to God, for the image is moving through various levels of potency and act, on the one hand, and obscurity and beauty, on the other.”⁵¹ Strikingly, immediately preceding his comments concerning the necessity of virtue for likeness as “signifying the expression and perfection of the image,”⁵² Thomas quotes Damascene: “In this sense Damascene says (*De Fid. Orth.* ii. 12) that the image implies *an intelligent being, endowed with free-will and self-movement, whereas likeness*

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 183.

⁴⁸ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 9: “[I]n quantum est communius quam imago.”

⁴⁹ Ibid.: “[I]n quantum significat quandam imaginis perfectionem.”

⁵⁰ Ibid.: “[N]on enim est virtus sine dilectione virtutis.”

⁵¹ Dauphinais, “Loving the Lord Your God,” p. 242.

⁵² *STh* I, q. 93 a. 9: “[S]ecundum quod significat imaginis expressionem et perfectionem.”

implies a likeness of power, as far as this may be possible in man.”⁵³ As we will see as we turn our attention to conformational aspect of the image of God in humans, the first half of this quotation appears in the prologue to the *Secunda Pars*.

One might therefore say that the moral life as the return of the human being to God – and which furnishes the subject matter of the *Secunda Pars* – is suggested in the second half of the statement: the second half of the statement in effect concerns the likeness that is constituted by the perfection of the image through a life of virtue according to grace. It is to the theme of the perfection of the image – the likeness of conformation – in the *Summa* in its broad outline that we turn in the next section. As will become apparent a familiarity with this broader perspective enables us to afford a greater weight to the aspect of conformation at *STh* I, q. 93, than is possible within the confines of Merriell’s exegetical concerns.

Before proceeding to a consideration of the notion of likeness according to conformation, let us summarize our findings thus far. Man is said to be made to the image of God on account of his intellectual nature. This likeness between God and man is of course analogical and is predicated upon the divine creative act. Thomas distinguishes three levels of perfection of the image: (1) all men are endowed with the capacity to know and to love God; (2) this capacity is actualized by grace so that they can actually or habitually know and love God; and (3) this capacity is brought to perfection in the likeness of glory where men know and love God perfectly. These three levels of perfection of the image are rooted in man’s intellectual nature whereby human beings are able to imitate God’s eternal act of knowing and loving by virtue of knowing and loving God. The second and third levels bring this capacity for knowing and loving God from potency to act. The acts of knowing and loving

⁵³ Ibid.: “Et secundum hoc Damascenus dicit quod *id quod est secundum imaginem, intellectuale significat, et arbitrio liberum per se potestativum, quod autem secundum similitudinem, virtutis, secundum quod homini possibile est inesse, similitudinem.*”

God, in which the image is optimally expressed, reflect the eternal processions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: the Son as the Word of the Father, and the Holy Spirit as the Love of the Father and Son. Thus the image of God in man is the ineradicable capacity in man for participation in the life of the Holy Trinity and is realized inasmuch as the soul imitates God in the activities of knowing and loving God. This realization or perfection of the image has its ground in and is possible only on account of the analogical likeness between God and human beings. The conformational aspect of the image flows from and perfects the analogical aspect and it perfects this analogical aspect of the image by establishing a man in virtue.

2. Likeness according to conformation

The dynamics of the perfection of humans according as they are made to the image of God rather than the explicit enunciation of this theme fuels Thomas's contemplation in the *Secunda Pars*. Nevertheless, while it is true that he does not return explicitly to the doctrine of the image very often, he does refer to it at crucial points in the *Summa*. After its consideration at *STh* I, q. 93, where humans are related to God as to their first cause or beginning (*principium*), it recurs at the beginning of the *Secunda Pars*, as we have pointed out, where Thomas examines them as directed to God as their end (*finis*). In the prologue he introduces the study of human activity by relating human actions to God's creative action as an image is related to its exemplar. Having written in the *Prima Pars* about the exemplar, God, and about those things which He created, he turns in the *Secunda Pars* to man "as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions."⁵⁴ The full text of the prologue reads as follows:

⁵⁴ *STh* I-II, prol.: "[S]ecundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium habens et suorum operum potestatem."

Since, as Damascene states (*De Fide Orthod.* ii. 12) man is said to be to God's image, in so far as the image implies *an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement*: now that we have treated of the exemplar, *i.e.*, God, and of those things which came forth from the power of God in accordance with His will; it remains for us to treat of His image, *i.e.*, man, inasmuch as he too is the principle of his actions, as having free-will and control of his actions.⁵⁵

This prologue intimates that man is not a static object; he is rather, as J.-P. Torrell puts it, “a being in the process of becoming.”⁵⁶ Since God is not only our First Cause but also our Final End, Thomas therefore turns to a consideration of Beatitude. Torrell comments on the significance of Thomas's use of image in the prologue of the *Secunda Pars* and its function in uniting the *Prima Pars* and the *Secunda Pars*:

If the human being has God as its end, it is because man has been made by God “in his image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26). The result is an irresistible attraction inscribed in man's very nature to become like God in the way that an image resembles the model on which it is made. The human person will find his fulfillment in striving more to imitate that model. That is why Thomas devotes much attention in the First Part (q.

⁵⁵ Ibid.: “Quia, sicut Damascenus dicit, homo factus ad imaginem Dei dicitur, secundum quod per imaginem significatur *intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum*; postquam praedictum est de exemplari, scilicet de Deo, et de his quae processerunt ex divina potestate secundum eius voluntatem; restat ut consideremus de eius imagine, idest de homine, secundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium habens et suorum operum potestatem.”

⁵⁶ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2: *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: CUA, 1996), p. 81.

93) to the theme of the image of God when he speaks of man's creation and his nature. And he spontaneously recalls the theme of image when he speaks of human action. And thus the theme of the image of God organically links the First and Second Parts.⁵⁷

Merriell voices a similar opinion in asserting that the *Secunda Pars* takes up the discussion of the image of God where the *Prima Pars* leaves off: "Thomas first considers the image as the terminus that concludes God's creation of man. In the *secunda pars*, following Damascene, he considers the image the principle of human action inasmuch as man has the power to direct his own acts in pursuit of his ultimate end."⁵⁸ At any rate the human being as the image of God is in the *Summa* placed within a definite narrative context.

Perhaps the best delineation of the place of the concept of human beings as the image of God in the overall architectonic of the *Summa Theologiae* is to be found in Leonard Boyle's seminal work entitled *The Setting of the Summa theologiae of Saint Thomas*, where the author argues that the *Summa Theologiae* represents an attempt on Thomas's part to integrate Dominican practical theology into a broader theological framework:

But he [Thomas] now gave that practical theology a setting which had not been very evident in Dominican circles before him. By prefacing the *Secunda* or moral part with a *Prima pars* on God, Trinity and Creation, and then rounding it off with a *Tertia pars* on the Son of God, Incarnation and the Sacraments, Thomas put practical theology, the study of Christian man, his virtues and vices, in a full theological context. Christian morality, once and for all, was shown to be something more than a question

⁵⁷ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, p. 82.

⁵⁸ Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 170.

of straight ethical teaching or of vices and virtues in isolation. Inasmuch as man was an intelligent being who was made master of himself and possessed of freedom of choice, he was in the image of God. To study human action is therefore to study the image of God and to operate on a theological plane. To study human action on a theological plane is to study it in relation to its beginning and end, God, and to the bridge between, Christ and his sacraments.⁵⁹

This quotation brings out the centrality of the notion of humans as made to the image of God in Thomas's account of free human agency. Free human agency can be properly understood only in the light of God as exemplar. Like everything else that is considered in *sacra doctrina*, human being and agency is conceived *sub ratione Dei*. Put briefly, in the words of Brian J. Shanley, "the doctrine of *imago Dei* means that human action, including human freedom, can only be understood in the light of the exemplar of the Trinity."⁶⁰

In addition to being understood in the light of the exemplar Trinity, however, the human person as the image of God as understood by Thomas is intrinsically ordered towards fulfillment in the beatific vision. This insight is virtually contained in the *sed contra* at *STh* I, q. 4 a. 3, where Thomas asks whether any creature can resemble God.⁶¹ In this text he prefaces his affirmative response to this question by citing two biblical texts which tellingly juxtapose creation and the Second Coming: "Let us make man to our own image and

⁵⁹ Boyle, *The Setting of the Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas*, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Brian J. Shanley, O.P., "Aquinas's Exemplar Ethics," *The Thomist* 72 (2008), p. 347.

⁶¹ This point is made by Colman O'Neill, "L'homme ouvert à Dieu (*Capax Dei*)" in *Humain à l'image de Dieu*, ed. Pierre Bühler (Geneva : Labor et Fides, 1989), p. 248. Quoted in Shanley, "Aquinas's Exemplar Ethics," p. 348.

likeness”⁶² (Gen. 1:26) and “When He shall appear we shall be like to Him”⁶³ (John 3:2). Shanley captures the import of this juxtaposition of biblical texts as follows: “Protology and eschatology are here inextricably intertwined; it is not possible to understand the creation of the human person without seeing it as ordered to its end. We are made in the image and likeness of God in order to be assimilated to God, both now and in the life to come.”⁶⁴ This idea undergirds the response to an objection at *STh* I, q. 35 a. 2, where it is claimed that the name ‘Image’ is not proper to the second Person of the Trinity since it is also applied to human beings. Thomas responds by pointing out that the Son is the perfect Image of the Father in that He subsists in the same divine nature. In contrast, the divine image in humans is imperfect and so “man is not simply called the image, but *to the image*, whereby is expressed a certain movement of tendency to perfection.”⁶⁵ The implication is that the image dynamically unfolds in this life towards its perfect realization in the beatific vision.

Read in the light of the broader scheme and thrust of the *Summa Theologiae*, the concept of likeness of confirmation at *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1, can be illuminated to a greater degree than we find in Merriell’s admirable study.⁶⁶ In this article Thomas asserts that what an image adds to the vestigial likeness found in all creatures is that it is copied from something else and seeks to imitate its exemplar.⁶⁷ Since exemplar causality implies formal and final causality, an image is endowed with a form like that of the exemplar in order to become like the

⁶² “[F]aciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram.”

⁶³ “[C]um apparuerit, similes ei erimus.”

⁶⁴ Shanley, “Aquinas’s Exemplar Ethics,” p. 348.

⁶⁵ *STh* I, q. 35 a. 2 ad 3: “[H]omo non solum dicitur imago, sed ad imaginem, per quod motus quidam tendentis in perfectionem designatur.”

⁶⁶ This paragraph is based on Shanley, “Aquinas’s Exemplar Ethics,” pp. 348-49.

⁶⁷ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1: “[I]mago enim dicitur ex eo quod agitur ad imitationem alterius.”

exemplar through its actions. The formal similitude that makes the human being an image of God is the capacity to know and to love, bearing in mind that intellect and will are not in God and humans univocally but rather analogically. Thus, while there is an ontological chasm between the form as instantiated in God, on the one hand, and in His image, on the other, the image can nonetheless imitate God in an imperfect way – through “conformity, participation, and dynamic assimilation.”⁶⁸

Shanley also offers a reading of *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4, that brings out the operation of likeness of conformation in a way that can be said to augment Merriel’s exegesis. As we recall, Thomas argues that the image of God in human beings can be considered in three ways: firstly, in so far as they possess a natural aptitude for knowing and loving God, an aptitude that is grounded in the very nature of the mind and therefore common to all human beings; secondly, in so far as human beings actually or habitually know and love God, albeit imperfectly, thanks to the conformation effected by grace; and, thirdly, in so far as they know and love God perfectly, an image that is attained by the likeness of glory. Shanley correctly discerns in Thomas’s presentation “a dynamic relationship between nature, grace and glory.”⁶⁹ He writes: “The purpose of the creation of human nature, with its natural aptitude for knowing and loving God, is that human beings might actually know and love God through grace as the prelude to glory.”⁷⁰ Shanley also notes that the *exitus-reditus* theme that structures the *Summa* is operative in a summary way in this text. According to the dynamics of *exitus* and *reditus* all things proceed from God as their First Cause and return to Him as to their Source according to their own particular mode of being. Man as the image of God

⁶⁸ Shanley, “Aquinas’s Exemplar Ethics,” p. 349.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

returns to his Creator according to the dynamics of knowing and loving that have been inscribed in his being by God in the act of creation.

The three ways or stages in which humans are said to image God by reason of their intellectual nature are connected by the notions of potentiality and actuality. The first stage, common to all and even prior to grace, involves a natural ‘aptitude’ to know and to love God. This knowledge does not attain God in His very Self but rather, as Romanus Cessario, O.P., explains, “according to the soul’s own proper mode of being and as the cause of that being.”⁷¹ The love involved in this mode of imaging God does not attain the heights of that love conferred by grace, that is to say, charity “which loves God above all things in a higher way than nature does.” Natural love inclines to God above all things inasmuch as He is “the beginning and the end of the natural good.”⁷² The second stage, constituted by the conformity of grace, actualizes this aptitude of knowing and loving God so that man enjoys a spiritual fellowship with God and loves Him with the love of charity as the object of beatitude.⁷³ This interpretation is legitimated on the basis of two fundamental principles in Thomas’s theology of grace and nature: firstly, grace presupposes nature (*gratia praesupponit naturam*) and secondly, grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it (*gratia perficit naturam, non tollit*). Indeed, grace presupposes nature, just as perfection presupposes the perfectible.⁷⁴ The

⁷¹ Romanus Cessario, O.P., *Introduction to Moral Theology* (Washington, D.C.: CUA, 2001), p. 29.

⁷² *STh* I-II, q. 109 a. 3 ad 1 : “Natura enim diligit Deum super omnia, prout est principium et finis naturalis boni.”

⁷³ See *ibid.*

⁷⁴ *STh* I, q. 2 a. 2 ad 1: “Sicut gratia (praesupponit) naturam, et ut perfectio perfectibile.” See also *Super De Trinitate* q. 2 a. 3: “Dona gratiarum hoc modo naturae adduntur quod eam non tollunt, sed magis perficiunt; unde lumen fidei, quod nobis gratis infunditur, non destruit lumen naturalis rationis divinitus nobis inditum”; *In III Sent*, d. 13, q. 1 a. 1 ad 2: “[G]ratia est perfectio naturae”; and, *De ver* q. 27 a. 6 ad 1: “Gratia ... perficit tamen esse naturale, in quantum addit spirituale.”

imperfect mode of imaging God by way of the conformity of grace is in turn brought to the perfection of the likeness of glory in the knowledge and love of God enjoyed by the blessed.⁷⁵ In other words, we are “ordained to the heritage of eternal glory by the gift of grace.”⁷⁶ Indeed, referring to 1 John 3: 9, Thomas points out that “grace is called the *seed* of God,” for “it is evident that sanctifying grace bears the same relation to beatitude as the seedlike form in nature does to the natural effect.”⁷⁷ Anselm K. Min summarizes the three stages well when he states that human life is “a *process* in which our “natural aptitude” is being actualized and perfected by grace for the end of glory.”⁷⁸

In light of the foregoing Thomas’s assertion that “the soul is naturally capable of grace”⁷⁹ is perfectly intelligible – although it is important to emphasize that the natural mode of knowing and loving God differs radically from that conferred by grace. Following the lead of St. Augustine, Thomas tells us that the soul is fit to receive God by grace on account of its having been made in His image and likeness. Just as it is not a miraculous work when a natural thing is moved contrary to its inclination, except “whenever this takes place beyond the order of the proper cause,”⁸⁰ neither is it miraculous for God to justify the ungodly, for “no other cause save God can justify the ungodly, even as nothing save fire can heat water.”⁸¹ It is clear that for Thomas, therefore, the aptitude to receive grace is inscribed in the nature of

⁷⁵ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 4.

⁷⁶ *STh* I, q. 33 a. 3: “[O]rdinantur ad haereditatem aeternae gloriae per munus gratiae acceptum.”

⁷⁷ *STh* I, q. 62 a. 3: “Manifestum est autem quod gratia gratum faciens hoc modo comparatur ad beatitudinem, sicut ratio seminalis in natura ad effectum naturalem, unde I Ioan. III, gratia semen Dei nominatur.”

⁷⁸ Anselm K. Min, *Paths to the Triune God: An Encounter between Aquinas and Recent Theologies* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), p. 30.

⁷⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 113 a. 10: “[N]aturaliter anima est gratiae capax.”

⁸⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 113 a. 10 ad 2: “[S]ed quando hoc fit praeter ordinem propriae causae.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: “Iustificare autem impium nulla alia causa potest nisi Deus, sicut nec aquam calefacere nisi ignis.”

the soul; indeed, he regards this aptitude as “a natural good.”⁸² Not even sin can take away this aptitude on account of the permanence of the rational nature in which it is rooted; the aptitude for grace results from the rational nature as such, even though sin does of course diminish this aptitude.⁸³ Thus, human beings are by nature destined to a supernatural destiny on account of the aptitude of the soul for the reception of grace. Expressed otherwise, “rational creatures, who forasmuch as they are made to the image of God, are capable of Divine beatitude.”⁸⁴

At a later stage in our study we will examine Thomas’s doctrine of grace in greater detail. For the moment it suffices to note his fundamental definition of grace as that special love whereby God “draws the rational creature above the condition of its nature to a participation of the Divine good.”⁸⁵ In other words, grace so elevates our acts of knowing and loving that they share in God’s own very life and God’s own Beatitude.⁸⁶ It is nevertheless important to bear in mind that, as expressions of grace, the theological virtues, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, beatitudes and fruits do not destroy but perfect human nature. As Thomas P. Harmon expresses the point, “They trickle down through his entire being, elevating him and making him fit to act for his true end.”⁸⁷ It is also worth noting that in the notion of the elevation of our acts of knowing and loving so that they share in God’s life and Beatitude we

⁸² *De malo* q. 2 a. 11: “[B]onum naturae.”

⁸³ See *De malo* q. 2 a. 12.

⁸⁴ *STh* III, q. 23 a. 1: “[R]ationales creaturas, quae, inquantum sunt ad imaginem Dei factae, sunt capaces beatitudinis divinae.”

⁸⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 1: “[T]rahit creaturam rationalem supra conditionem naturae, ad participationem divini boni.”

⁸⁶ See *STh* I, q. 26 for a discussion of the divine beatitude.

⁸⁷ Thomas P. Harmon, “The Sacramental Consummation of the Moral Life According to St. Thomas Aquinas,” *New Blackfriars* 91 (2010), p. 469.

witness the doctrine of deification/divinization in Thomas. In her study of the doctrine of divinization in the *Summa*, A.N. Williams argues that for Thomas grace means the divine indwelling. Concerning grace, she writes: “Grace is therefore not principally an entity distinct from God or an effect of God’s working in us but the fact of God’s indwelling, the name given to the sustenance that is God’s own being, shared that we might also be divine.” Thomas, of course, in no way equates grace with God; nevertheless, “he does not use the term *grace* so as to distinguish it from divine being itself, shared with creatures.”⁸⁸

Thus, God’s grace brings us into His Trinitarian knowing and loving. It is not a question of imitation from a distance, as one might imitate the example of another human being. This intimate sharing or ontological participation in God’s own knowing and loving is expressed clearly by Thomas. The dynamics of the inner life of the Trinity – whereby “the Divine Persons are distinct from each other by reason of the procession of the Word from the Speaker, and the procession of Love connecting Both”⁸⁹ – is most closely represented in the acts of human knowing and loving: “Therefore, first and chiefly, the image of the Trinity is to be found in the acts of the soul, that is, inasmuch as from the knowledge which we possess, by actual thought we form an internal word; and thence break forth into love.”⁹⁰ Ghislain Lafont expresses succinctly and powerfully the dynamics inherent in imaging God by grace: “It is God himself who proceeds from God through human acts.”⁹¹ As Shanley notes, this

⁸⁸ A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 84.

⁸⁹ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 7: “Divinae autem personae distinguuntur secundum processionem verbi a dicente, et amoris connectentis utrumque.”

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*: “Et ideo primo et principaliter attenditur imago Trinitatis in mente secundum actus, prout scilicet ex notitia quam habemus, cogitando interius verbum formamus, et ex hoc in amorem prorumpimus.”

⁹¹ Ghislain Lafont, *Structures et méthode dans la somme théologique de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p. 270 : “C’est Dieu lui-même qui procède de Dieu au travers des actes humains.”

notion recalls the doctrine of the divine indwelling encountered in Thomas's treatment of the divine missions, where Thomas delineates the link between Trinity and creation:

The soul is made like to God by grace. Hence for a divine person to be sent to anyone by grace, there must needs be a likening of the soul to the divine person Who is sent, by some gift of grace. Because the Holy Ghost is Love, the soul is assimilated to the Holy Ghost by the gift of charity: hence the mission of the Holy Ghost is according to the mode of charity. Whereas the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love. Hence Augustine says (*De Trin.* ix. 10): *The Word we speak of is knowledge with love.* Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love ... Thus Augustine plainly says (*De Trin.* iv. 20): *The Son is sent, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone.* Now perception implies a certain experimental knowledge; and this is properly called wisdom (*sapientia*), as it were a sweet knowledge (*sapida scientia*).⁹²

⁹² *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: "Ad secundum dicendum quod anima per gratiam conformatur Deo. Unde ad hoc quod aliqua persona divina mittatur ad aliquem per gratiam, oportet quod fiat assimilatio illius ad divinam personam quae mittitur per aliquod gratiae donum. Et quia spiritus sanctus est amor, per donum caritatis anima spiritui sancto assimilatur, unde secundum donum caritatis attenditur missio spiritus sancti. Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem, unde Augustinus dicit, in IX libro de Trin., *verbum quod insinuare intendimus, cum amore notitia est.* Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur filius, sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris ... Et ideo signanter dicit Augustinus quod filius mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur, perceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat. Et haec proprie dicitur sapientia, quasi sapida scientia." See also Shanley, "Aquinas's Exemplar Ethics," p. 351.

In conclusion we can say that the theme of man as the image of God, which is systematically treated in the *Prima Pars*, forms the subject matter of the *Secunda Pars* inasmuch as man is endowed with free will and is in control of his actions. Man who has been created by God seeks to become like Him just as every effect seeks to be assimilated to its cause. God is “the first exemplary, effective, and final principle of all goodness.”⁹³ Thus, like all created things, man possesses a similitude of the divine goodness, albeit an analogical similitude, by virtue of God’s creative act. Man is also irresistibly attracted to God, his final End, as to the exemplar according to Whose image he has been made and Who alone can satisfy his desire for fulfilment. The way to the fulfilment of ultimate Beatitude consists in striving to imitate the divine exemplar. Moral action consequently has the Holy Trinity as its beginning and end while Christ, in Whom the Second Person of the Trinity assumed human nature, provides us with the divine exemplar in human form. The implications of imitating Christ for human knowing and loving furnish the subject matter of chapter four of the present work. Here we can simply note that by imitating the divine exemplar the image realizes its potential which attains its perfect fulfilment in the beatific vision. Man as the image of God returns to his Creator by the progressive realization of his capacities for knowing and loving with which he has been endowed by God in the act of creation. In this regard A.N. Williams refers to “the implication of seamlessness between this life and the next.”⁹⁴ The first level of the image involves natural love that inclines man to God above all things as the beginning and end of the natural good. The second level brings us into the dispensation of grace in which man loves God with the love of charity as the object of Beatitude. Grace confers a

⁹³ *STh* I, q. 6 a. 4: “[U]numquodque dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari, effectivo et finali totius bonitatis.”

⁹⁴ A.N. Williams, “Deification in the *Summa theologiae* : A Structural Interpretation of the *Prima Pars*,” *The Thomist* 61 (1997), p. 221.

mode of knowing and loving God that differs radically from the natural mode in that it confers an ontological participation in God's own knowing and loving. To repeat Lafont's expression: "It is God himself who proceeds from God through human acts."⁹⁵

3. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to show the interrelatedness of the aspects of likeness of analogy and likeness of conformation – which correspond to the Latin and Eastern traditions of Augustine and Damascene respectively – in Thomas's exposition of the doctrine of man as made to the image of God. Dauphinais summarizes the emphases of these two Fathers as follows: "Augustine brings out how our being orients us to God; Damascene highlights our action."⁹⁶ On the one hand, on the basis of his reading of Augustine's conception, Thomas emphasizes that we are intrinsically ordered to knowing and loving God, an ordering that is perfectly realized in the beatific vision. This ordering owes itself to God's creative act. On the other hand, Damascene's influence enables Thomas to appreciate the significance of the doctrine of the image for understanding the return of human beings to God through love of virtue. This aspect of the image, namely likeness of conformation, presupposes the analogical aspect as its foundation just as the history of salvation presupposes creation. While creation and salvation belong to two different levels of discourse, salvation nonetheless unfolds in the context of creation. In the same way, the likeness of conformation, which pertains to the dynamics of salvation, is realized within the context of likeness of analogy, which is grounded in creation.

⁹⁵ Lafont, *Structures et méthode*, p. 270 : "C'est Dieu lui-même qui procède de Dieu au travers des actes humains."

⁹⁶ Dauphinais, "Loving the Lord Your God," p. 267.

The sense in which likeness of analogy constitutes the basis for likeness of confirmation is encapsulated in Dauphinais's pity assertion: "Anthropology spills over into morality."⁹⁷ On the other hand, it is only on coming through faith to know and to love the triune God that the notion of likeness of analogy makes any sense, a point made by Augustine and reiterated by Thomas: "Nor is the image in our mind an adequate proof in the case of God, forasmuch as the intellect is not in God and ourselves univocally. Hence, Augustine says (*Tract. xvii. in Joan.*) that by faith we arrive at knowledge, and not conversely."⁹⁸ In this regard, Merriel's interpretation seems more accurate: there obtains a relationship of interdependence between likeness according to analogy and likeness according to confirmation. Anthropology in the light of the revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ spills over into morality. The interdependence of the two aspects of the image lead us moreover to maintain that morality in the light of the revelation of the triune God in Jesus Christ spills over into anthropology. In other words, it conduces to the perfection of the image, which perfection is finally attained in the likeness of glory, when the human person knows and loves God perfectly.

This study is concerned with the dynamics of knowing and willing in the case of the image of God according as it is actualized by grace so that man can actually or habitually know and love the triune God. The acts of knowing and loving God reflect analogically the eternal processions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Crucial to the argument to be unfolded in this book is the notion that the image of God in man is the ineradicable capacity in man for participation in the life of the Holy Trinity and that this capacity is realized in so far as the

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ *STh* I, q. 32 a. 1 ad 2: "Similitudo autem intellectus nostri non sufficienter probat aliquid de Deo, propter hoc quod intellectus non univoce invenitur in Deo et in nobis. Et inde est quod Augustinus, super Ioan., dicit quod per fidem venit ad cognitionem, et non e converso."

soul imitates the inner life of the Trinitarian God in the activities of knowing and loving God. Having engaged in this chapter with Thomas's teaching concerning man as made to the image of the Trinity, we proceed in the next chapter to examine his doctrine concerning the Holy Trinity, to Whose image human beings are made. The analogy of knowing and loving will provide some understanding of the Trinitarian exemplar – in so far as such understanding is possible for finite intellects. By the same token a greater appreciation of the doctrine of the Trinity will cast more light on man as made to the image of the Trinity, a point that will become evident in chapter three which will deal with the faculties of intellect and will, those faculties whereby man is made to the image of the Trinity.

CHAPTER II

THE GOD TO WHOM WE ARE CONFORMED

Chapter one examined the doctrine that man is created in the image and likeness of God precisely on account of the fact that he possesses the capacities for knowing and loving. In this chapter we will see that part of Thomas's speculative task in elaborating his Trinitarian theology consists in working out what it means to ascribe these same capacities for knowing and loving to the triune God. The ascription of these psychological capacities to God is an analogous one, thereby giving rise to what is often termed the 'psychological' analogy. Analogous discourse is fundamental to Thomas's treatment of the Trinity for intellect and will cannot be ascribed univocally to human beings and to God. At the same time, as intimated at the end of the last chapter, it is not possible to prove the Trinity of Persons on the basis of the image of God as it is represented in humans. Indeed, in the final analysis, God's radical inscrutability remains. The analogy of human intellection and volition can nevertheless furnish a means for us to comprehend something of the inner life of the triune God, albeit according to our finite mode of human understanding.

Recourse to analogy is demanded by the distinction between Creator and creation, which is one of the basic guiding principles in Thomas's theological discourse, is operative. Thomas's discussion of God's simplicity at *STh* I, q. 3, exercises a decisive influence in this regard. There he denies the ascription to God of any kind of composition in created reality: in God there can be no composition of form and matter, of essence and existence, of subject and accident. Consequently, since it is bound up with created reality, human language necessarily falls infinitely short when attempting to describe God. Thomas therefore advises caution concerning the use of language *in divinis* in the very first article dedicated to the names of

God at *STh* I, q. 13: although God can be named from creatures, these names can in no way be taken to express the divine essence.¹ Further on in his discussion he explains why: God is “the excelling principle of whose form the effects fall short, although they derive some kind of likeness thereto.”² This likeness is predicated on the fact that the perfections of created reality come from God as their creative cause. Consequently, although they exist in God in a preeminent way, human beings can nonetheless draw inferences about Him based on the basis of these creaturely perfections and express these inferences in language. As Jennifer Hart Weed writes, “Since God is the first agent cause, Aquinas argues that any perfection that is found in a creature will preexist in God in a more perfect way.”³ Whatever we say about God is therefore necessarily said imperfectly.

The deliberations of *STh* I, q. 3, not only determine Thomas’s approach to the use of language *in divinis* but also determine his subsequent discussions about God as well as his reading of Scripture. It is Scripture, however, that constitutes the source of the particular analogy with human knowing and willing that enables Thomas to probe the mystery of the processions of the Word and Love of the Trinitarian God. While a proper understanding of God’s simplicity determines a correct use of language *in divinis* in general, namely the use of analogical discourse, various passages in Scripture provide the inspiration for the particular

¹ See *STh* I, q. 13 a. 1: “Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri per suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudinem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis. Sic igitur potest nominari a nobis ex creaturis, non tamen ita quod nomen significans ipsum, exprimat divinam essentiam secundum quod est.”

² See *STh* I, q. 13 a. 2: “[S]icut excellens principium, a cuius forma effectus deficiunt, cuius tamen aliqualem similitudinem effectus consequuntur.”

³ Jennifer Hart Weed, “Creation as a Foundation of Analogy in Aquinas,” in *Divine Transcendence and Immanence in the Work of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by Harm Goris, Herwi Rikhof, and Henk Schoot (Leuven/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), p. 147.

analogy of knowing and loving in Thomas's deliberations concerning the eternal processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The most fundamental aspect of Thomas's Trinitarian theology is in fact his attention to language, particularly the language of Scripture to which we now turn our attention. The introductory comments that follow indicate the structure of the remainder of the chapter.

1. The Scriptural foundations of Thomas's Trinitarian theology

Thomas begins his speculative engagement with the mystery of the Holy Trinity at *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1, with Jesus's words in St. John's Gospel: "*From God I proceeded* (Jo. viii. 42)," ⁴ which he quotes in the *sed contra*. In reflecting on this verse in the course of his commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, Thomas is clear about the signification of this assertion: it means that Christ "proceeded from God from eternity as the Only Begotten, of the substance of the Father."⁵ After quoting from Ps 109:4, "From the womb before the daystar I begot you,"⁶ Thomas appeals to the opening verse of St. John's Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word."⁷ Thomas's extended commentary on this verse emphasizes the divinity of the Word Who is co-eternal, co-equal, and consubstantial with the Father.⁸ It is

⁴ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1, *sed contra*: "Ioan. VIII, *ego ex Deo processi*."

⁵ *In Joh* VIII, lectio V [1236]: "[I]nquam, a Deo, ut unigenitus ab aeterno, de substantia patris."

⁶ *Ibid.*: "[A]nte Luciferum genui te." See below for a brief account of Thomas's Christological interpretation of the psalms.

⁷ *Ibid.*: "[I]n principio erat verbum."

⁸ See *In Joh* I, lectio I [29]: "Ex praemissis etiam patet quod verbum, proprie loquendo, semper personaliter accipitur in divinis, cum non importet nisi quid expressum ab intelligente. Item quod verbum in divinis sit similitudo eius a quo procedit; et quod sit coaeternum ei a quo procedit, cum non prius fuerit formabile quam formatum, sed semper in actu; et quod sit aequale patri, cum sit perfectum, et totius esse patris expressivum; et quod sit coessentiale et consubstantiale patri, cum sit substantia eius. Patet etiam quod cum in qualibet natura

precisely this Word Who became incarnate and dwelt among us.⁹ From the very beginning of Thomas's theology of the Trinity therefore there is a consciousness that *theologia* and *oikonomia* are not disparate realities. With regard to the present discussion, it is the same Son Who proceeds eternally from the Father and Who proceeds temporally by becoming man.¹⁰ As we will see, the Son also proceeds by dwelling in us "according to his invisible mission."¹¹

Thomas then makes explicit the point of his quotation from Jn 8:42 – "*From God I proceeded*" – in this *sed contra*: "Divine Scripture uses, in relation to God, names which signify procession."¹² The problem is in fact not whether Scripture employs the language of procession – it clearly does – but rather how one is to understand this language. The early controversies involving Arius and Sabellius offer evidence of misunderstanding in this regard. In countering both these heresies Thomas appeals to other Scriptural texts. Thus, in opposing Arius's contention that "the Son proceeds from the Father as His primary creature"¹³ as an effect from its cause, Thomas cites the authority of the first letter of St. John: "*That ... we may be in His true Son. This is the true God* (1 John v. 20)."¹⁴ In a similar manner, Thomas rebuts Arius's assertion that the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and

illud quod procedit, habens similitudinem naturae eius a quo procedit, vocetur filius, et hoc verbum procedat in similitudine et identitate naturae eius a quo procedit, convenienter et proprie dicitur filius, et productio eius dicitur generatio."

⁹ *In Joh VIII*, lectio V [1236]: "[V]erbum caro factum et missus a Deo per incarnationem."

¹⁰ See *STh I*, q. 43 a. 2: "Processio autem et exitus dicuntur in divinis et aeternaliter et temporaliter, nam filius ab aeterno processit ut sit Deus; temporaliter autem ut etiam sit homo, secundum missionem visibilem."

¹¹ See *ibid.*: "[S]ecundum invisibilem missionem."

¹² *STh I*, q. 27 a. 1: "[D]ivina Scriptura, in rebus divinis, nominibus ad processionem pertinentibus utitur."

¹³ *Ibid.*: "Et sic accepit Arius, dicens filium procedere a patre sicut primam eius creaturam."

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: "Quod est contra id quod dicitur de filio, I Ioan. ult., *ut simus in vero filio eius, hic est verus Deus.*"

the Son as the creature of both”¹⁵ with the support of the first letter to the Corinthians: “*Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost?* (1 Cor. vi. 19).”¹⁶ In his commentary on St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, Thomas is explicit about the divinity of the Holy Spirit: “[B]ecause the Holy Spirit is God, it is correct to say that anyone in whom the Holy Spirit exists is called a temple of God.”¹⁷ He then paraphrases one of his favourite quotations from Scripture in order to offer more precision with regard to the nature of the dwelling within us as within His temple: “[T]he Holy Spirit is chiefly in the heart of men, in whom the love of God is poured out by the Holy Spirit, as it says in Rom (5:5).”¹⁸ It is significant that Thomas’s commentary on 1 Cor 6:19, which inspires and guides his reflection at *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1, moves so readily between *theologia* and *oikonomia*.

Thomas employs the same approach in dealing with Sabellius’s heresy: he outlines Sabellius’s teaching before showing how it does not tally with the witness of Scripture. Thomas informs the reader that he could appeal to many other passages in which the Lord speaks his Word to us but the ones that he has cited are sufficient to the task at hand. It is only at this point that he elaborates the analogy of knowing and willing. The purpose of this analogy is to elucidate the witness of Scripture and is as such subordinate to this witness.

The text of Scripture continues to be the guiding light in the second and third articles of *STh* I, q. 27, which deal with the processions of the Word and of Love respectively. The second article, which asks whether any procession in God can be called generation, quotes

¹⁵ Ibid.: “Et sic accepit Arius ... spiritum sanctum procedere a patre et filio sicut creaturam utriusque.”

¹⁶ Ibid.: “Et de spiritu sancto dicitur, I Cor. VI, *nescitis quia membra vestra templum sunt spiritus sancti?*”

¹⁷ *Ad I Cor* VI, lectio III [309]: “[Q]uia igitur spiritus sanctus Deus est, conveniens est, quod in quocumque est spiritus sanctus, templum Dei dicatur.”

¹⁸ Ibid.: “Est autem spiritus sanctus principaliter quidem in cordibus hominum, in quibus charitas Dei diffunditur per spiritum sanctum, ut dicitur Rom. V, 5.”

Psalm 7: “It is said (Ps. ii. 7): *This day have I begotten Thee.*”¹⁹ In this regard one ought to bear in mind the tradition of interpreting psalms Christologically, to which Thomas subscribes. In this regard Thomas claims in the prologue to his commentary on the psalms that “All the things that concern faith in the incarnation are so clearly set forth in this work that it almost seems like the Gospel, and not prophecy.”²⁰ In his commentary dedicated to Psalm 2, he tells us that the psalmist describes “his tribulations, signifying the tribulations of Christ.”²¹ Concerning the particular phrase quoted at *STh* I, q. 27 a. 2, Thomas explains: “*This day have I begotten you*, that is, eternally: for this is not a new but an eternal generation”²² Thomas understands “this day” or “today” to signify the present and “because this is eternal, it is always.”²³ This interpretation is once again subordinate to the text of Scripture – in this case serving to elucidate its Christological signification.

Finally, with respect to the procession of the Holy Spirit, the *sed contra* of *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3, appeals to the Gospel according to St. John in order to show the Scriptural foundations for the notion that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and that He is distinct from the Son: “*I will ask my Father and He will give you another Paraclete* Jo. xiv. 16).”²⁴ In his commentary dedicated to St. John’s Gospel, Thomas emphasizes that “**another**, indicates

¹⁹ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 2, *sed contra*: “[D]icitur in Psalmo II, *ego hodie genui te.*”

²⁰ *In psalmos* prol.: “Omnia enim quae ad fidem incarnationis pertinent, sic dilucide traduntur in hoc opere, ut fere videatur Evangelium, et non prophetia.”

²¹ *In psalmos* 2: “[I]n hoc procedit ad materiam propriam, scilicet tribulationes suas signantes tribulationes Christi”

²² *Ibid.*: “[E]go hodie genui te, idest aeternaliter: non enim est nova, sed aeterna generatio”

²³ *Ibid.*: “[H]odie praesentiam signat, et quod aeternum est, semper est.”

²⁴ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3, *sed contra*: “[D]icitur Ioan. XV. Ipse autem est alius a filio, secundum illud Ioan. XIV, *rogabo patrem meum, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis.*”

a distinction of persons in God.”²⁵ Again, drawing upon the evidence of other Scriptural texts from 1 John and Isaiah, Thomas shows how the term “another” does not imply difference of nature but rather “it indicates the different way each is an advocate and a consoler.”²⁶

Thomas’s discussion of the divine Persons of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at *STh* I, qq. 33-38 is a discussion of the names given in Scripture to these Persons. With regard to the Persons of the Son and Holy Spirit, Thomas also deliberates on other Scriptural names: Word and Image in the case of the Son; Love and Gift in the case of the Holy Spirit. We have already witnessed these names in Thomas’s treatment of the divine missions. Thomas’s analysis of both sets of biblical names in his discussion of the inner life of the Trinity reveals the profoundly intimate and dynamic connection between *theologia* and *oikonomia*.²⁷ The discussion of these names on the level of *theologia* prepares for their discussion on the level of *oikonomia*. On the levels both of *theologia* and of *oikonomia* the guiding force of the biblical text is fundamental.

In keeping with the focus of this study on human knowing and willing as construed in a theological light, this chapter will depart from the order of Thomas’s exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity by first examining his teaching concerning the missions of the Son and

²⁵ *In Joh XIV*, lectio I [1911]: “Hoc autem quod dixit *alius*, designat distinctionem personalem in divinis.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*, [1912]: “[D]esignat alium modum, quo uterque est consolator et advocatus.”

²⁷ Herwi Rikhof’s cautionary remarks concerning the use of the terms ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ with regard to the Trinity are pertinent here: “The terms ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ are somewhat confusing, since they might suggest two Trinities. It is better to use the distinction *theologia-oikonomia*, indicating that two different perspectives are used to talk about the same reality” (Herwi Rikhof, “Trinity,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow [Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005], p. 37). Given the widespread use of the terms ‘immanent’ and ‘economic’ in literature on about the Trinity, it is difficult to avoid them. Nevertheless, insofar as is possible, we adopt Rikhof’s suggestion as preferable.

the Holy Spirit in the *oikonomia*. Thomas begins with a consideration of the Church's faith in the Trinity by following the order of teaching (*via doctrinae*) rather than that of discovery (*via inventionis*) or history. As Min remarks, "There is a profound logic to this method of theology that regards itself as wisdom and concerns itself primarily with God as the beginning and end of all things and secondarily with all created things *sub ratione Dei*."²⁸ A different order of exposition here does not imply any lack in Thomas's approach. Indeed, the contrary is the case: the aim here is merely to bring out the hermeneutical implications of a Trinitarian vision of reality, a vision that understands the Trinity to be the creative origin and the end of all that exists. In other words, we are concerned with the ramifications of the doctrine of the Trinity for our understanding of reality.

In this regard Thomas's teaching concerning the divine missions implicates the human intellect and will, the intellect being assimilated to the Word and the will to the Holy Spirit. The assimilation of the intellect to the Word is effected by faith while the assimilation of the will to the Holy Spirit is effected by charity. Since the logic of the inner life of the Trinity governs the logic of the divine missions, it follows that the life of faith, charity, and wisdom (which engages both faith and charity) is also so governed. Indeed, the divine missions grant human knowing and loving a participation in the Trinitarian life of knowing and loving. Examination of Thomas's doctrine concerning the Trinitarian processions affords some limited understanding of the mystery of Trinitarian knowing and loving to which we are assimilated by the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Later chapters will elaborate the hermeneutical significance of this perfection of the image of God which is effected by its being drawn into a deeper participation in the life of knowing and loving of the Holy Trinity.

²⁸ Min, *Paths to the Triune God*, p. 169.

2. The Trinitarian missions

While Thomas does mention the visible missions of the Son and Spirit that occurred at specific moments in human history, God's continuing presence by grace in the faithful by means of the invisible missions constitutes his major preoccupation at *STh* I, q. 43. This interest, as Rikhof remarks, "makes I.43 not only the culmination of the preceding *quaestiones*, but also the bridge to what follows: first, the subsequent *quaestiones* that deal with the *procession* of the creatures from God (qq. 44 ff.), and second, the other parts of the *Summa*."²⁹ In a way that bears comparison with *STh* I, q. 93 a. 9, the question on the divine missions virtually contains in a summary and abstract way subsequent questions in which Thomas elaborates more fully God's salvific action in the *oikonomia*. The grace-giving role of the Spirit outlined in question 43 constitutes, moreover, precisely the basis for the configuration of man to God as he journeys towards final beatitude. The dynamics of this configuration as they are elaborated in the *Secunda Pars* are expressed in summary form in the following passage from the *Summa contra Gentiles*:

Just as, to get a body to the place of fire, it must be likened to fire by acquiring that lightness according to which fire is moved by its own motion; so also, to get a man to the beatitude of divine enjoyment which is proper to God in His own nature, these are necessary: first, that by spiritual perfections he be likened to God; then, that he operate with these perfections; and, thus, lastly, achieve that beatitude mentioned. Of course, the spiritual gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit, as was shown. And thus

²⁹ Herwi Rikhof, "Trinity in Thomas: Reading the *Summa Theologiae* against the Background of Modern Problems," *Jaarboek 1999 Thomas Instituut Utrecht*, p. 43.

by the Holy Spirit we are configured to God and through Him we are made ready for good operation. And by the same Spirit the road to beatitude is opened to us.³⁰

The *Secunda* and *Tertia Partes* of the *Summa Theologiae* concern themselves with how this configuration is effected, namely through a life of virtue modeled on the example of Christ while availing of the sacramental helps that He has granted us. Without the grace of the Holy Spirit, however, configuration of the image to the Trinity would not be possible.

Focusing on *STh* I, q. 43, we must bear in mind in the first instance that in being sent a divine Person does not begin to exist where He did not previously exist nor cease to exist where He was. The invisible mission of a divine Person means rather “a new way of existing in another”³¹ according to which the divine Person comes to dwell in the rational creature by virtue of the gift of sanctifying grace. Human beings possess the Holy Spirit, Who dwells in them by the gift of sanctifying grace.³² At issue here is clearly the sanctification of the human person. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit by the gift of sanctifying grace sanctifies the human person.

Article three furnishes the central article of *STh* I, q. 43, and the Holy Spirit figures most prominently in this regard, being mentioned explicitly in three of the four objections

³⁰ *ScG* IV, c. 21 [8]: “Manifestum est autem quod, sicut ad hoc quod corpus aliquod ad locum ignis perveniat, oportet quod igni assimiletur levitatem acquires, ex qua motu ignis proprio moveatur; ita ad hoc quod homo ad beatitudinem divinae fruitionis, quae Deo propria est secundum suam naturam, perveniat, necesse est, primo quidem quod per spirituales perfectiones Deo assimiletur; et deinde secundum eas operetur; et sic tandem praedictam beatitudinem consequetur. Dona autem spiritualia nobis per spiritum sanctum dantur, ut ostensum est. Et sic per spiritum sanctum Deo configuramur; et per ipsum ad bene operandum habiles reddimur; et per eundem ad beatitudinem nobis via paratur.”

³¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 1: “[N]ovum modum existendi in aliquo.”

³² *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3.

and in the *sed contra*.³³ We also encounter Thomas's favourite quotation about the Holy Spirit: "[A]ccording to Rom. v. 5, *the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us*."³⁴ Even the one objection that refers to the Son also alludes to the discussion of article 5 where the mission of the Son is linked to that of the Spirit. Thus, as Rikhof remarks, "the discussion is about the depth or the impact of the *missio*, especially about the depth or impact of the *missio* of the Spirit."³⁵ The centrality of the Spirit in Thomas's discussion is further evidenced by his analysis of the notions of 'to send' and 'to give.' Both are biblical expressions but while the former is employed in Scripture to refer to the Son and the Spirit, the latter is associated in Scripture with the Spirit. The phrase "to dwell therein as in His own temple" (*habitare in ea sicut in templo suo*) recalls St. Paul's comments about the Spirit while Thomas explicitly employs the verb 'to dwell' (*inhabitare*) with regard to the Spirit: "[T]he Holy Ghost is possessed by man, and dwells within him, in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace."³⁶

The invisible mission according to sanctifying grace transcends God's presence according to the common mode of His essence in all things whereby He is in all things "as the cause existing in the effects which participate in His goodness."³⁷ While even apart from grace God is intimately involved in the natural life of man as He is with all creation, for "God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence,"³⁸ His presence to human beings is of a higher order than that which is according to His common mode of His essence. God's presence to human

³³ This discussion in this paragraph is based on Herwi Rikhof, "Trinity," pp. 95-6.

³⁴ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 *obj.* 2: "[S]ecundum illud Rom. V, *caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis*."

³⁵ Rikhof, "Trinity in Thomas: Reading the *Summa Theologiae*," pp. 95-6.

³⁶ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3: "[I]n ipso dono gratiae gratum facientis, spiritus sanctus habetur, et inhabitat hominem."

³⁷ *Ibid.*: "[S]icut causa in effectibus participantibus bonitatem ipsius."

³⁸ *Ibid.*: "Deus est in omnibus rebus per essentiam, potentiam et praesentiam."

beings is proportioned to their rational nature, wherein one can say that He is present to them as “the object known is in the knower and the beloved in the lover.”³⁹ In other words, God’s presence to humans and His configuring them to Himself is predicated upon their being made to His image. Thomas’s focus in this article is on the capacity of humans to receive the divine missions. By the acts of knowing and loving God the rational creature is said to reach God Himself (*attingit ad ipsum Deum*). In order to highlight the special mode of this presence to the rational creature Thomas asserts, as noted in the last paragraph, that God is said not only to exist therein but also “to dwell therein as in His own temple.”⁴⁰ This indwelling thus occasions an intimate relationship of the believer with the triune God, a relationship that brings about his sanctification.

The divine missions to the rational creature are governed by the logic of the intra-Trinitarian processions according to which the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son. Hence the reason why the Father as distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit cannot be sent, for mission means procession from another and in God this necessarily means procession according to origin. Consequently, “as the Father is not from another, in no way is it fitting for Him to be sent; but this can only belong to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, to whom it belongs to be from another.”⁴¹ Does this logic not however lead

³⁹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3: “[I]n qua Deus dicitur esse sicut cognitum in cognoscente et amatum in amante.” See *STh* I, q. 8, for Thomas’s discussion of the existence of God in all things and especially the third article which deals with the question as to whether God is everywhere by essence, presence and power. Thomas concludes this article as follows: “[E]st in omnibus per potentiam, inquantum omnia eius potestati subduntur. Est per praesentiam in omnibus, inquantum omnia nuda sunt et aperta oculis eius. Est in omnibus per essentiam, inquantum adest omnibus ut causa essendi.”

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: “Deus non solum dicitur esse in creatura rationali, sed etiam habitare in ea sicut in templo suo.”

⁴¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 4.: “[C]um pater non sit ab alio, nullo modo convenit sibi mitti; sed solum filio et spiritui sancto, quibus convenit esse ab alio.”

to the strange conclusion that man as *imago Dei* does not share in the life of the Trinity properly speaking but only in the life of the Son and of the Holy Spirit since they alone are sent from another? Thomas's response to this difficulty is brief, all the while invoking the logic of the Trinitarian processions: "Although the effect of grace is also from the Father, who dwells in us by grace, just as the Son and the Holy Ghost, still He is not described as being sent, for He is not from another."⁴² By grace God inhabits the rational soul according to the logic of His Trinitarian being – and according to this logic the Son and Holy Spirit proceed from the Father:

The whole Trinity dwells in the mind by sanctifying grace ... But that a divine person be sent to anyone by invisible grace signifies both that this person dwells in a new way within him and that He has His origin from another. Hence, since both to the Son and to the Holy Ghost it belongs to dwell in the soul by grace, and to be from another, it therefore belongs to both of them to be invisibly sent. As to the Father, though He dwells in us by grace, still it does not belong to Him to be from another, and consequently He is not sent.⁴³

⁴² *STh* I, q. 43 a. 4 ad 2: "[L]icet effectus gratiae sit etiam a patre, qui inhabitat per gratiam, sicut et filius et spiritus sanctus; quia tamen non est ab alio, non dicitur mitti."

⁴³ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5: "[P]er gratiam gratum facientem tota Trinitas inhabitat mentem ... Mitti autem personam divinam ad aliquem per invisibilem gratiam, significat novum modum inhabitandi illius personae, et originem eius ab alia. Unde, cum tam filio quam spiritui sancto conveniat et inhabitare per gratiam et ab alio esse, utrique convenit invisibiliter mitti. Patri autem licet conveniat inhabitare per gratiam, non tamen sibi convenit ab alio esse; et per consequens nec mitti." See also *STh* I, q. 33 a. 1: "[H]oc nomen principium nihil aliud significat quam id a quo aliquid procedit, omne enim a quo aliquid procedit quocumque modo, dicimus esse principium; et e converso. Cum ergo pater sit a quo procedit alius, sequitur quod pater est principium."

The sending of a divine Person to the soul by grace occasions an assimilation or likening of that soul to the Person who is sent. Hence “the soul is assimilated to the Holy Ghost by the gift of charity”⁴⁴ since the Holy Spirit is Love; it is likened to the Son by “a certain experimental knowledge,”⁴⁵ that is to say, by wisdom since the sending of the Son is not in accordance with any kind of intellectual perfection whatsoever but rather “according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love,”⁴⁶ for the Son is not any kind of word whatsoever but rather the Word “Who breathes forth love.”⁴⁷ This ‘breathing forth love’ refers to the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. Since the Holy Spirit receives the Son’s nature, Thomas can properly speak of the Word breathing forth Love. Once again the central role of the Spirit in Thomas’s account of the Trinitarian missions is evidenced by the fact that all the gifts as such are attributed to Him since “He is by His nature the first Gift, since He is Love.”⁴⁸ Those Gifts such as wisdom that pertain to the intellect, however, “are appropriated in a certain way to the Son”⁴⁹ and it is in this respect that we speak of the mission of the Son. Thomas quotes Augustine in this regard: “*The Son is sent to anyone invisibly, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone.*”⁵⁰ It should be noted that the many gifts that the Holy Spirit bestows upon the faithful in the *oikonomia* are

⁴⁴ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: “[P]er donum caritatis anima spiritui sancto assimilatur.”

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*: “[E]xperimentalem quandam notitiam.”

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: “[S]ecundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: “[S]pirans amorem.”

⁴⁸ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 1: “[H]abet rationem primi doni, secundum quod est amor.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: “[A]ttribuuntur per quandam appropriationem filio.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: “[T]unc invisibiliter filius cuiquam mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur.” The quotation is from *De Trin.* IV 20.

rooted in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit as Love.⁵¹ As will be consistently emphasized, it is the same Trinitarian grammar that structures *oikonomia* as structures *theologia*.

As already intimated, the infinite ontological distance between God and human beings leads Thomas to have recourse to analogy in order to gain some insight into the mystery of the inner life of the Trinity. In this way he provides a rationale for understanding how the soul's acts of knowing and loving God can be described as the temporal representation of the eternal processions of the Word and Love respectively: the illumination of the intellect is appropriated to the Son, the enkindling of the will to the Holy Spirit. As Merriel graphically expresses this point, "It is as if the divine Word were proceeding in the mind of man, and from thence the Person of Love were proceeding in the human act of loving God ... The Trinity draws its created image into the processional life of divine knowing and loving."⁵² And being thus drawn into the processional life of divine knowing and loving is the only way to eternal Beatitude, the attainment of which is the measure of the success of our earthly endeavours. Thus, as Carlo Leget states: "Knowledge of the divine Persons, although not obtainable by natural reason, is necessary for the correct appreciation of creation and, more important [sic], the welfare of humankind which is perfected by the Son incarnate and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, the knowledge of the triune God is connected with the success of the course of earthly life."⁵³

In brief, *STh* I, q. 43, in which Thomas deals with the Trinitarian missions, is intimately connected with subsequent questions in the *Summa* which deal with the action of

⁵¹ *STh* I, q. 38 a. 2: "[A]mor habet rationem primi doni, per quod omnia dona gratuita donantur. Unde, cum spiritus sanctus procedat ut amor, sicut iam dictum est, procedit in ratione doni primi."

⁵² Merriel, "Trinitarian Anthropology," pp. 137-38.

⁵³ See Carlo Leget, *Living with God: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Life on Earth and 'Life' after Death* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), pp. 48-9.

grace in the life of man. The divine missions are in fact ordered towards the sanctification of man by grace, which sanctification is possible on account of man having been made to the image of the Trinity. This sanctification, predicated upon the capacity to know and to love God, is moreover effected by the divine missions in conformity with the logic of the intra-Trinitarian processions, according to which the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit from the Father and Son. It involves the soul being assimilated to the Holy Spirit by charity and to the Son by the gift of wisdom. Implicated here are obviously the faculties of will and intellect respectively and so the soul's acts of knowing and loving God can be described as the temporal representation of the eternal processions of the Word and Love respectively.

At this point we move on to consider Thomas's speculations concerning the mystery of the inner life of the Trinity into which we are drawn by the missions of the Word and Love, which missions conform the *imago Dei* to the Trinitarian God in Whose knowing and loving he participates. More precisely, we turn to a consideration of the Trinitarian processions, the first pillar of what Gilles Emery, O.P., describes as "three pillars of Trinitarian doctrine,"⁵⁴ namely procession, relation and person. These pillars are built on the basis of analogy with the human faculties of knowing and loving. Far from being a theological abstraction divorced from the life of faith, the doctrine of procession (along with those of relation and person) constitutes the fruit of a speculative engagement that is deeply rooted in the experience of faith. This experience presupposes the Trinitarian missions that we have already treated. Chapters four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine will return to these Trinitarian missions in considering Thomas's doctrine concerning the Incarnation of Christ, grace (the indwelling of the Holy Spirit), faith, charity, and wisdom. In those chapters the

⁵⁴ Gilles Emery, O.P., *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person: Thomistic Essays* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2007), p. 8.

focus will be on the hermeneutical implications of being drawn more deeply into the life of the Trinity by the actions of the Word and Love in us.

These implications cannot however be understood apart from the Trinitarian God's inner life of knowing and loving in which human knowing and loving participates, for the logic of the inner life of the Trinity governs the missions: just as the Son proceeds from the Father and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son so too, in the case of the missions, the Father sends the Son and the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit. The logic of the inner life of the Trinity, by extension, therefore also governs the life of faith, charity, and wisdom in human beings, since this life is possible only on the basis of the missions. In the next chapter we will examine the dynamics of human knowing and willing, having already elaborated Thomas's doctrine of man as made to the image of the Trinity. With regard to the analogical aspect of the image, God is the primary analogate. Human knowing and loving participates in the divine knowing and loving in a mode proportioned to our finite being. The next section examines Thomas's speculations concerning the Trinitarian processions in order to gain some limited insight into the mystery of divine knowing and loving into which we are drawn and to which we are conformed by the Holy Spirit, Who configures us to the Son, Who in turn leads us to the Father.

3. The processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit

The analogy of procession is grounded in a certain similitude that obtains between the highest creatures, namely "intellectual substances," and God – albeit recognizing that "even the similitudes derived from these fall short in representation of divine objects."⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1: "Cum autem Deus sit super omnia, ea quae in Deo dicuntur, non sunt intelligenda secundum modum infimarum creaturarum, quae sunt corpora; sed secundum similitudinem supremarum creaturarum, quae sunt intellectuales substantiae; a quibus etiam similitudo accepta deficit a repraesentatione divinorum."

Certainly, procession cannot be understood in God on the basis of its reality in material beings in which procession takes place “either according to local movement, or by way of a cause proceeding forth to its exterior effect, as, for instance, like heat from the agent to the thing made hot.”⁵⁶ Thomas has earlier proved that God is not a body in his treatment of God’s simplicity.⁵⁷ Procession as it applies to corporeal being implies change – understood either as local movement or as a cause producing an effect – and change is irreconcilable with God’s simplicity. The procession of the Son from the Father cannot therefore have anything to do with movement in material things. Hence the recourse that Thomas has to intelligible emanation, that is to say, “of the intelligible word which proceeds from the speaker, yet remains in him.”⁵⁸

The analogy of human intellection can furnish a means for us to grasp divine procession, albeit such comprehension is according to the limited mode of human understanding. For while in the case of material things procession entails some differentiation between what proceeds and the source from which it emanates, this state of affairs does not necessarily apply to the intelligible procession involved in the act of understanding. Since in understanding the intellect in act becomes one with the intelligible object in act, it follows that “the more a thing is understood, the more closely is the intellectual conception joined and united to the intelligent agent.”⁵⁹ ‘Movement’ is of course involved in human intellection but

⁵⁶ Ibid.: “Non ergo accipienda est processio secundum quod est in corporalibus, vel per motum localem, vel per actionem alicuius causae in exteriorem effectum, ut calor a calefaciente in calefactum.”

⁵⁷ *STh* I, q. 3 a. 1.

⁵⁸ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1: “[A]ccipienda est processio ... secundum emanationem intelligibilem, utpote verbi intelligibilis a dicente, quod manet in ipso.”

⁵⁹ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1 ad 2: “Manifestum est enim quod quanto aliquid magis intelligitur, tanto conceptio intellectualis est magis intima intelligenti, et magis unum, nam intellectus secundum hoc quod actu intelligit, secundum hoc fit unum cum intellecto.”

not physical change. As Rowan Williams graphically explains, “Mind doesn’t leak out of itself to make friends with an object and bring it home. It is just that understanding is the life of one reality in another.”⁶⁰ In other words, the kind of movement involved in human intellection does not entail change of place, state or composition although it does entail “self-differentiation, a letting what is other live in me without either the other or myself losing something.”⁶¹

In human cognition, however, the concept or internal word does not form part of the human essence; it is rather an accident distinct from the essence. The one who understands and what is understood remain ontologically distinct. In contrast, since there is nothing in God that is not identical with the divine essence, no ontological diversity can arise in the divine act of self-understanding. Consequently, “the divine Word is of necessity perfectly one with the source whence He proceeds, without any kind of diversity.”⁶² In the course of a later question devoted solely to the Son as the Word of God, Thomas makes the same point: at *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1 ad 3, he tells us that in God to understand “means complete identity, because in God the intellect and the thing understood are altogether the same.”⁶³ Williams captures this point when he writes that “The Word is God understanding God.”⁶⁴ Thomas expresses this point in more Trinitarian terms when he remarks that the Father, in conceiving the Word, understands Himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as all other things comprised in

⁶⁰ Rowan Williams, “What does Love Know: St Thomas on the Trinity,” *New Blackfriars* 82 (2001), p. 262.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1 ad 2: “[N]ecesse est quod verbum divinum sit perfecte unum cum eo a quo procedit, absque omni diversitate.”

⁶³ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1 ad 3: “In Deo autem importat omnimodam identitatem, quia in Deo est omnino idem intellectus et intellectum.”

⁶⁴ Williams, “What does Love Know,” p. 263.

this knowledge. Thus, “the whole Trinity is *spoken* in the Word; and likewise also all creatures.”⁶⁵ Williams again elaborates:

[T]he Father generates the Son in the act of knowing that he (the Father) is already actively giving what he is to another, and that in knowing that primordial and eternal giving he also knows all the relations in which divine life can stand to anything that is not divine – knows, in Thomas’s idiom, the ways in which the divine act of existence can be participated by specific finite forms.⁶⁶

Thus, the analogy with the human faculties of knowing and loving which has been adduced *ad manifestationem Trinitatis* supports the way in which “the Catholic faith understands procession as existing in God,”⁶⁷ a way that sees the procession of the Word as being compatible with the divine simplicity.

Scripture however reveals a second procession within the Trinity, as we have already noted, namely that of the Holy Spirit. Thomas is keenly aware of this fact: “The Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father (Jo. xv. 26); and He is distinct from the Son according to the words, *I will ask My Father, and He will give you another Paraclete* (Jo. xiv. 16). Therefore in God another procession exists besides the procession of the Word.”⁶⁸ Thomas reminds us that procession exists in God in a manner proper to an intellectual nature. Intellectual nature is

⁶⁵ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1 ad 3: “[S]ic tota Trinitas verbo dicatur, et etiam omnis creatura.”

⁶⁶ Williams, “What does Love Know,” p. 263.

⁶⁷ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 1: “Et sic fides Catholica processionem ponit in divinis.”

⁶⁸ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3, *sed contra*: “[S]piritus sanctus procedit a patre, ut dicitur Ioan. XV. Ipse autem est alius a filio, secundum illud Ioan. XIV, *rogabo patrem meum, et alium Paracletum dabit vobis*. Ergo in divinis est alia processio praeter processionem verbi.

however characterized not only by the action of the intellect but also by that of the will. The intellect knows an object as true by means of the procession of a concept and by the act of intellectual judgment; the will, on the other hand, desires the object known as good, thereby giving rise to the procession of love. As Levering explains, “Every intellectual nature, be it the human soul or (analogously) God himself, is united with the being of its object under these two aspects, the true and the good.”⁶⁹ Consequently, just as the procession of the word in an intellectual nature is by way of an intelligible operation, the analogy with the life of mind proper to human beings which is inspired by Scripture demands that we posit a second procession grounded in the operation of the will, namely “that of love, whereby the object loved is in the lover.”⁷⁰ Thomas therefore concludes that “besides the procession of the Word in God, there exists in Him another procession called the procession of love.”⁷¹

An objection arises however on account of the divine simplicity: according to the divine simplicity, the divine will and intellect are identical.⁷² It would seem therefore that we must identify the procession of love in God with the intelligible procession of the intellect. In other words, it would seem that the doctrine of divine simplicity constrains the number of processions in God to one, namely that of the Word.⁷³ This kind of objection, however, fails to appreciate the logical demands of analogy. Analogy with the acts of human knowing and loving leads Thomas to conclude that although diversity of operations is not compatible with the divine simplicity, the concept (*ratio*) of intellect and will nevertheless requires that

⁶⁹ Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 158.

⁷⁰ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3: “Secundum autem operationem voluntatis invenitur in nobis quaedam alia processio, scilicet processio amoris, secundum quam amatum est in amante.”

⁷¹ *Ibid.*: “Unde et praeter processionem verbi, ponitur alia processio in divinis, quae est processio amoris.”

⁷² *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3 *obj.* 3: “[V]oluntas in Deo non est aliud ab intellectu.”

⁷³ *Ibid.*: “Ergo in Deo non est alia processio praeter processionem verbi.”

processions belong to each of them and, indeed, that a certain order obtains between these processions.⁷⁴ This order is determined by the fact that “nothing can be loved unless it is conceived in the intellect.”⁷⁵ Thus, although God is supremely one, we can posit analogously an order between the processions according to their relation of origin. Thomas has already shown that there must obtain a certain order between the Word and the principle whence He proceeds even though in God the substance of the intellect and its concept are identical. In the same way, although one must grant that in God intellect and will are the same, one must posit “a distinction of order between the procession of love and the procession of the Word in God” on the grounds that love of its very nature proceeds from the concept of the intellect.⁷⁶ In this way Thomas is able to give conceptual expression to the reality expressed in the text of Scripture.

The procession of the Word is by way of generation “for He proceeds by way of intelligible action ... from a conjoined principle ... by way of similitude, inasmuch as the concept of the intellect is a likeness of the object conceived ... and exists in the same nature, because in God the act of understanding and His existence are the same.”⁷⁷ Conceptual

⁷⁴ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3 ad 3: “[L]icet in Deo non sit aliud voluntas et intellectus, tamen de ratione voluntatis et intellectus est, quod processiones quae sunt secundum actionem utriusque, se habeant secundum quendam ordinem.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: “[N]ihil enim potest voluntate amari, nisi sit in intellectu conceptum.”

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*: “Sicut igitur attenditur quidam ordo verbi ad principium a quo procedit, licet in divinis sit eadem substantia intellectus et conceptio intellectus; ita, licet in Deo sit idem voluntas et intellectus, tamen, quia de ratione amoris est quod non procedat nisi a conceptione intellectus, habet ordinis distinctionem processio amoris a processione verbi in divinis.”

⁷⁷ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 2: “Procedit enim per modum intelligibilis actionis ... et a principio coniuncto ... et secundum rationem similitudinis, quia conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei intellectae ... et in eadem natura existens, quia in Deo idem est intelligere et esse.”

precision, however, does not allow the procession of love in God to be called generation for while the intellect is actualized by the object residing according to its own likeness in it, likeness or similitude of the object within it does not serve to actualize the will. The will rather is made actual by having a certain inclination to whatever is willed.⁷⁸ In other words, the procession of the will is not so much by way of likeness as “by way of impulse and movement towards an object.”⁷⁹ Implicit in these comments is Thomas’s teaching concerning the will at *STh* I-II, q. 8 a. 1, albeit construed analogically for the purposes of the present discussion. Just as the human will follows from the form apprehended by the intellect,⁸⁰ the procession of the Holy Spirit issues from the Word, that is to say, God’s eternal conception of the divine form, in order to embrace that form in love. The logic of analogy demands that we understand what proceeds in God by way of love to proceed not as begotten or as Son but rather as Spirit, “which name expresses a certain vital movement and impulse, accordingly as anyone is described as moved or impelled by love to perform an action.”⁸¹ According to Thomas, the procession of Love, that is to say, of the Holy Spirit, may be called spiration.⁸² In this regard, he explains that while we can distinguish the act of understanding from its ‘product’, namely the inner word, we lack a word for the ‘product’ of loving: “[T]he

⁷⁸ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4: “[V]oluntas autem fit in actu ... ex hoc quod voluntas habet quandam inclinationem in rem volitam.”

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: “Processio autem quae attenditur secundum rationem voluntatis, non consideratur secundum rationem similitudinis, sed magis secundum rationem impellentis et moventis in aliquid.”

⁸⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 8 a.1: “[O]mnis inclinatio consequatur aliquam formam ... intellectivus seu rationalis, qui dicitur voluntas, sequitur formam apprehensam.”

⁸¹ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4: “Et ideo quod procedit in divinis per modum amoris, non procedit ut genitum vel ut filius, sed magis procedit ut spiritus, quo nomine quaedam vitalis motio et impulsio designatur, prout aliquis ex amore dicitur moveri vel impelli ad aliquid faciendum.”

⁸² *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4 ad 3.

procession which is not generation has remained without a special name; but it can be called spiration, as it is the procession of the Spirit.”⁸³

The simplicity of the divine nature and divine operation ensures that every immanent operation or procession communicates the divine nature: “All that exists in God is one with the divine nature.”⁸⁴ While both the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed as God, however, the communication of the divine nature varies according to the operation proper to the particular procession, as we have seen.⁸⁵ While distinct, these processions are nonetheless intimately related according as “the one begotten is the principle of love.”⁸⁶ Further on, Thomas writes that “the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love.”⁸⁷ As Levering asserts, Thomas’s use of analogy in no way “tends toward a rationalistic equation of God, who is infinite and incomprehensible, with the human mind.”⁸⁸ He continues:

Aquinas employs the analogy to illumine what has been revealed, namely an order of origin in the simple divine Act. He speaks analogously rather than univocally. He does not equate the Word with the human procession of the intellect, or the Spirit with the human procession of the will. The interplay between Word and Spirit is far more mysterious than what we understand analogously from the human processions of the intellect and the will.⁸⁹

⁸³ Ibid.: “[P]rocessio quae non est generatio, remansit sine speciali nomine. Sed potest nominari spiratio, quia est processio spiritus.”

⁸⁴ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4 ad 1: “[Q]uidquid est in divinis, est unum cum divina natura.”

⁸⁵ See also *ScG* IV, c. 23 [13].

⁸⁶ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4 ad 2: “Unde non sequitur quod amor sit genitus, sed quod genitum sit principium amoris.”

⁸⁷ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: “Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem.”

⁸⁸ Levering, *Scripture and Metaphysics*, p. 158.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp. 158-59.

Procession in God cannot be understood in terms of procession in material things. The analogy of human intellect, in contrast, offers some means of talking about divine processions since intellectual motion does not entail movement from place to place, change of state or composition. While the concept or internal word involved in human cognition in no way constitutes part of the human essence, however, the divine being admits no ontological diversity. God's understanding is identical with God. God's Word is His understanding of Himself. In Trinitarian terms, the Father in uttering the Word knows Himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as all created things. In the Word is contained the understanding of the whole Trinity as well as of all creatures. Thomas's speculations thus afford us an understanding of the procession of the Word in a way that respects the divine simplicity. In a like manner they also allow us some kind of grasp of the procession of love in the Trinity since an intellectual nature is endowed not only with intellect but also with will: the intellect knows an object as true by means of the procession of a concept and by the act of intellectual judgment while the will desires the object known as good, which desire gives rise to the procession of love. Hence, in addition to the procession of the Word in God there must also be a procession of love. We must of course ever keep the demands of analogy in mind and recall that God is supremely simple. Nevertheless, analogy also demands that we posit an order between the procession of the Word and the procession of love in God. The logic of analogy also demands that while the procession of the Word is to be understood in terms of generation, just as a concept of the intellect constitutes a likeness of the object conceived, the procession of love in God, that is to say, the procession of the Holy Spirit, is by way of movement or vital impulse, for love moves or impels one to perform an action. The technical term for this procession of Love is spiration. As is the case with the procession of the Word, the procession of Love communicates the fullness of the divine nature. Both these

processions moreover are intimately related in that the Word breathes forth love. Thomas's speculations concerning the Trinity are however in no way an exercise in reductionism. The mystery of the Trinity far transcends the limits of analogy.

Thomas's treatment of the processions does not bring his Trinitarian theology to completion for it still remains to be shown how the processions involve relations of origin that constitute the distinct Persons in God while preserving the substantial unity of the Trinity. Thomas's doctrine of relation effects this task. His discussion of the notion of divine Person flows from the doctrine of relation since it presupposes this doctrine along with his teaching concerning essence. An exposition of these elements which are crucial in establishing the overall logical coherence of Thomas's Trinitarian theology would however draw attention far away from what is central to the argument of this chapter, namely to demonstrate the unity of *theologia* and *oikonomia* in this theology. The processions within the Trinity ground and dictate the structure of the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in the *oikonomia*,⁹⁰ which missions are of fundamental significance for human knowing and willing. All too often there is a failure to appreciate the relevance of Thomas's speculative engagement with the inner life of the Trinity for his discussions concerning the *oikonomia* as well as an all too common failure to recognize the deliberations of the *Secunda Pars* as pertaining in effect to the *oikonomia*. In order to offset these failures as efficiently as possible, it is imperative for me to keep my presentation as focused and as clear as possible. Otherwise the connections which it is my aim to show forth run to risk of being obscured at least partially.

In the next section we turn our attention explicitly to the Scriptural names that are proper to the Son (Word and Image) and to the Holy Spirit (Love and Gift) in order to further

⁹⁰ This formulation is in no way meant to suggest that there are two different Trinities but rather attempts to give expression to two the different perspectives in talking about the same reality.

our understanding of the Trinitarian structure of the divine missions, as a result of which missions human knowing and willing is perfected. With regard to the son, the name ‘Word’ denotes God’s concept of Himself and of all creatures. Since the Word is God’s concept of all creatures as well as of Himself, all created things must have pre-existed in the eternal Word of God through Whom they have been created. This causal efficacy of the Word of God extends to human knowing and willing since we are perfected in wisdom by participating in the Word of God. Adopting Emery’s words we can say that the causality of divine truth and the doctrine of exemplarity provide the basis for a ‘filial theology of wisdom,’⁹¹ that is to say, a theology of wisdom grounded in the Person of the Son. Intimately connected with the discussion of the name ‘Word’ in this chapter are the examination in chapter four of what one might term Thomas’s wisdom Christology at *STh* III, q. 8 a. 3, and the treatment in chapter eight of the Gift of wisdom.

Thomas’s treatment of the name ‘Image’ flows logically from his discussion of the name ‘Word’. This name ‘Word’ furnishes a connection with his elaboration of the doctrine of human beings as made to the image of the Trinity as well as providing a link with the Christology of the *Tertia Pars*. In brief, since they have been created through the Word Who is also the Image of the Father, they progress towards their perfection by imitating the example and words of the Incarnate Word.

Our consideration of Thomas’s treatment of the Holy Spirit focuses on the two proper names ascribed to this divine Person, namely Love and Gift. The intimate connection between *theologia* and *oikonomia* or, more precisely, that *oikonomia* is an expression of *theologia* in the history of salvation, is very much in evidence. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son from all eternity as Love but by this Love they love not only each

⁹¹ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 88, talks about a “filial theology of truth.”

other but human beings also. An examination of the intimate connection between the notions of ‘love’ and ‘gift’ serves to clarify why the name ‘Gift’ is properly said of the Holy Spirit. In general the notion love grounds that of gift for love is the first gift by which all other gifts are given. In a like manner the name ‘Gift’ is said properly of the Holy Spirit: He is the Love between the Father and the Son and as Love He proceeds as the first Gift in virtue of which all other Gifts are bestowed on us. Charity and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are discussed in later chapters, are grounded in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son.

4. The proper names of the Son and the Holy Spirit: from *theologia* to *oikonomia*

4.1 The Son as Word and Image

At *STh* I, qq. 34-35, Thomas examines the significance of the names Word and Image in his consideration of the Person of the Son. Thomas asks whether ‘Word’ is a personal name in God or rather an essential name that applies to Him in His unity. He follows the lead of John Damascene in suggesting three meanings for “our own word”:⁹² “[F]irst and chiefly, the interior concept of the mind is called a word; secondarily, the vocal sound itself, signifying the interior concept, is so called; and thirdly, the imagination of the vocal sound is called a word.”⁹³ As applied to God, word must have the first meaning – it must signify the concept of the intellect since God possesses neither voice nor imagination, both of which are bound up with created sensible reality. Since it is in the nature of the concept to proceed from the knowledge of the one conceiving, the divine Word must be understood in a like manner. Given, moreover, that procession in God belongs solely to Persons, the term ‘Word’ as used

⁹² *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1: “[S]ciendum est quod verbum tripliciter quidem in nobis proprie dicitur.”

⁹³ *Ibid.*: “[P]rimo et principaliter interior mentis conceptus verbum dicitur, secundario vero, ipsa vox interioris conceptus significativa, tertio vero, ipsa imaginatio vocis verbum dicitur.”

of God is thus “to be taken as said not essentially but personally.”⁹⁴ The Word in God therefore differs from the divine intellect and act of understanding: while the Word is said personally, not essentially, the intellect itself and the act of understanding are said essentially, not personally or relationally.

To speak and to be spoken imply each other. Since therefore the Word is spoken personally, and not essentially, so too we must assert that the Father alone utters the Word. As Emery expresses the point, “What pertains to the Son is to be the *Word conceived, formed, or expressed* by the Father.”⁹⁵ The Word is not common to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit; consequently, they cannot together constitute a single speaker. There is nevertheless a sense in which each Person is spoken for when any word is spoken, so too is the thing understood or signified by the word. Hence, while it belongs to one Person alone in God to be spoken in the same way as the Word is spoken, it nevertheless belongs to each Person to be spoken as being understood in the Word: the Father – by understanding Himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – conceives the Word “so that the whole Trinity is spoken in the Word.”⁹⁶ Not only is the whole Trinity spoken in the Word but likewise all creatures, since the Word expresses everything that the Father knows. Nonetheless, the Son alone is properly called the Word since He alone proceeds by way of emanation of the intellect and therefore subsists distinctly in relation to the Father who speaks.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1: “Unde verbum, secundum quod proprie dicitur in divinis, significat aliquid ab alio procedens, quod pertinet ad rationem nominum personalium in divinis, eo quod personae divinae distinguuntur secundum originem, ut dictum est. Unde oportet quod nomen verbi, secundum quod proprie in divinis accipitur, non sumatur essentialiter, sed personaliter tantum.”

⁹⁵ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 143.

⁹⁶ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 1 ad 3: “[S]ic tota Trinitas verbo dicatur.”

⁹⁷ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 2.

Not only is the whole Trinity spoken in the Word but also all creatures. God in one act understands not only Himself but also all things. In other words, “His one and only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures.”⁹⁸ While simply expressive of the Father, the Word of God is both expressive and operative with regard to creatures as Ps 32:9 gives us to know: “*He spake, and they were made.*”⁹⁹ The Christological character of divine exemplarity, which is stated in summary form at this stage in the *Summa*, receives further elaboration in the *Tertia Pars*. Of particular note for us is Thomas’s insistence on the agreement of the Word with human nature, which nature is made to the image of the Trinity by virtue of its possession of the faculties of knowing and loving.

At *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8, when dealing with the question of whether it was more fitting that the Person of the Son rather than any other divine Person should assume human nature, Thomas employs the analogy of the word or concept of the craftsman, which word or concept constitutes an exemplar likeness of whatever he makes.¹⁰⁰ On the basis of this analogy Thomas can then claim that the Word of God is the exemplar likeness of all creatures since, as we have already seen, in the Word is contained not only knowledge of the whole Trinity but also of all creatures. As Vivian Boland, O.P., comments, “The Word in which God knows himself, and therefore knows all things, the Word by which God creates all things, is thus the “place” of the *rationes rerum*.”¹⁰¹ Thomas points out that the Word has a particular agreement with human nature “since the Word is a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from

⁹⁸ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 3: “[U]nicum verbum eius est expressivum non solum patris, sed etiam creaturarum.”

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: “[D]ixit, et facta sunt.”

¹⁰⁰ See also *In Joh* I, lectio II [77]: “Quicumque enim aliquid facit, oportet quod illud praeconciptat in sua sapientia, quae est forma et ratio rei factae: sicut forma in mente artificis praeconcepta est ratio arcae faciendae.”

¹⁰¹ Vivian Boland, O.P., *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas: Sources and Synthesis* (Leiden/New York/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1996), p. 247.

Whom all man's wisdom is derived."¹⁰² One might reasonably conjecture that this particular agreement with human nature, predicated upon man's participation in the eternal Wisdom of the Word, is in turn based on his possession of the faculties of intellect and will whereby he is capable of knowing and loving God and is therefore made to the image of the Trinity. Since "the Word is a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from Whom all man's wisdom is derived," Thomas concludes that "man is perfected in wisdom (which is his proper perfection, as he is rational) by participating the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master."¹⁰³ As Min expresses the point, "The Word is the one absolute wisdom in which we must participate if we are to be wise."¹⁰⁴

In asserting that "man is perfected in wisdom ... by participating the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master," Thomas is arguably looking forward to his treatment of the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ later on in the *Tertia Pars* where the notion of the imitation of Christ's example looms large. In chapter four we will examine Thomas's teaching concerning *imitatio Christi* with a view to showing how this imitation entails an assimilation of the disciple's knowing and loving to the eternal concept of Wisdom Who has assumed Christ's human nature. This assimilation in turn brings the Christian to a knowledge of the Father since he is thereby drawn into the dynamics of the inner life of the Holy Trinity. Emery gives striking expression to this point:

¹⁰² *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "[H]abet convenientiam specialiter cum humana natura, ex eo quod verbum est conceptus aeternae sapientiae a qua omnis sapientia hominum derivatur."

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*: "[I]deo homo per hoc in sapientia proficit, quae est propria eius perfectio prout est rationalis, quod participat verbum Dei, sicut discipulus instruitur per hoc quod recipit verbum magistri."

¹⁰⁴ Min, *Paths to the Triune God*, p. 197.

The sanctifying mission of the Son is accomplished when its beneficiaries know the Father through participating in the Son's personal property, that is, through assimilation to the begotten Wisdom and begotten Truth who manifests the Father. Otherwise put, the Son conveys a likeness or resemblance to the modality through which he is referred to the Father; this resemblance is the imprint with which the Son marks the saints, for their union to God will come about through their being integrated into the personal relation that the Son has with the Father.¹⁰⁵

Emery's observation is based on the fact that in uttering the Word, the Father utters not only the whole Trinity but likewise all creatures. Assimilation to the Word therefore necessarily entails being drawn into the Son's relation to the Father.

Thomas's discussion of the Son as Image at *STh* I, q. 35 follows on logically from his treatment of the Son as Word for, as will become evident, the notion of the Son as perfect Image of the Father presupposes that He is the Word uttered by the Father. This question is also intimately connected with Thomas's deliberations concerning the human being as made to the image of the Trinity.

In the first of two articles devoted to the Son as Image, Thomas first of all clarifies the notion of image. Intrinsic to the notion of image is "similitude of species, or at least of some specific sign."¹⁰⁶ A discussion of this point in relation to corporeal things enables Thomas to achieve conceptual clarity before turning to the second Person of the Trinity. In corporeal things it is chiefly figure that constitutes the specific sign. Hence the various species of animals can be distinguished by their different visible forms but not by their colours.

¹⁰⁵ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶ *STh* I, q. 35 a. 1: "Non tamen quaecumque similitudo sufficit ad rationem imaginis; sed similitudo quae est in specie rei, vel saltem in aliquo signo speciei."

Similitude of species and of figure however does not suffice to constitute the idea of image. Also required is the idea of origin. A true image requires the procession of one thing from another like to it in species. A negative example drawn from Augustine elucidates this point: “*One egg is not the image of another because it is not derived from it.*”¹⁰⁷ Since “whatever imports procession or origin in God, belongs to persons,” it follows that the notion of Image in God is said of a divine Person.

The argument thus far does not however preclude the possibility of applying the name of Image to the Holy Spirit. This possibility is not a purely theoretical one as Thomas is aware: “The Greek doctors commonly say that the Holy Ghost is the Image of the Father and of the Son.”¹⁰⁸ Further argumentation is therefore required in order to secure the clear teaching of Scripture on this point: according to Col 1:15, the Son is “*the Image of the invisible God, the firstborn of creatures*” While Heb 1:3 describes Him as “*the brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance.*”¹⁰⁹ Fundamental to Thomas’s efforts to safeguard the Scriptural witness is the teaching that he has already elaborated concerning the processions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit as Word and Love respectively. The Holy Spirit as proceeding receives the nature of the Father just as the Son receives it. Crucially, however, the Holy Spirit is not said to be born, unlike the Son. Here it must be recalled that that divine procession which is termed generation by virtue of which the Son is said to be born of the Father is “by way of similitude inasmuch as the concept of the intellect is a likeness of the object conceived and exists in the same nature because in God the act of understanding and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid: “[U]num ovum non est imago alterius, quia non est de illo expressum.”

¹⁰⁸ *STh* I, q. 35, a. 2: “[D]octores Graecorum communiter dicunt spiritum sanctum esse imaginem patris et filii.”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.: “Dicitur enim Coloss. I, *qui est imago Dei invisibilis, primogenitus creaturae*; et ad Hebr. I, *qui cum sit splendor gloriae, et figura substantiae eius.*”

existence are the same.”¹¹⁰ In contrast, it does not pertain essentially to love to be of the same species as that from which it proceeds; rather, love as a procession of the will is “by way of impulse and movement towards an object.”¹¹¹ It of course does belong to the Holy Spirit to possess the divine nature inasmuch as He proceeds from the Father and the Son as the divine Love but analogy with human knowing and loving leads to the conclusion that the name ‘Image’ can be applied properly to the Son alone.

In chapter one we saw that it is according to analogy or to a certain proportion that human beings are considered as one with God or like to Him. Analogy allows us to refer to the human being as the image of God while respecting the infinite ontological distance between them. *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1, states that while there is in human beings a likeness to God, this likeness is imperfect and “Scripture implies the same when it says that man was made *to* God’s likeness; for the preposition *to* signifies a certain approach, as of something at a distance.”¹¹² In contrast, the Firstborn of all creatures referred to in Colossians possesses the same divine nature as the Father from Whom He proceeds and is therefore the perfect Image of God.¹¹³ These points, which are elaborated at *STh* I, q. 93, are given a more summary and simpler expression in Thomas’s treatment of the Son as Image. In a reply to an objection that the name Image is not proper to the Son alone, Thomas distinguishes between two ways in which the image of a thing may be found in something else: “In one way it is found in

¹¹⁰ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 2: “[S]ecundum rationem similitudinis, quia conceptio intellectus est similitudo rei intellectae, et in eadem natura existens, quia in Deo idem est intelligere et esse.” My translation.

¹¹¹ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 4: “Processio autem quae attenditur secundum rationem voluntatis, non consideratur secundum rationem similitudinis, sed magis secundum rationem impellentis et moventis in aliquid.”

¹¹² *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1: “Et hoc significat Scriptura, cum dicit hominem factum ad imaginem Dei, praepositio enim ad accessum quendam significat, qui competit rei distanti.”

¹¹³ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1 ad 2.

something of the same specific nature; as the image of the king is found in his son. In another way it is found in something of a different nature, as the king's image on the coin.”¹¹⁴ The first way applies to the Son as Image of the Father while the second way pertains to the human being as *imago Dei*. The idea that man is not simply called the image of God but rather is said to be “*to the image*”¹¹⁵ is also found in this context and the notion of likeness of the image according to conformation is intimated in the observation that the expression “*to the image*” denotes “a certain movement of tendency to perfection.”¹¹⁶ Since the Son is the perfect Image, the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that this “movement of tendency to perfection” must be one of conformation to Him. Thus, this question on the Son as Image furnishes a significant link with Thomas’s Christology in the *Tertia Pars*, where the dynamics of conformation to the Son by imitation of His example and words are very strong.

In brief, the term ‘Word’ as applied to God signifies God’s concept of Himself and of all creatures. In speaking the Word the Father understands Himself, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as well as all created things. The Son alone is properly called the Word since He alone proceeds from the intellect as its concept and therefore subsists distinctly in relation to the Father who speaks the Word. Not only is the whole Trinity spoken in the Word but all creatures are spoken as well. It follows that they pre-existed in the eternal Word of God before being created in their own proper natures. Expressed in other words, it is through God’s eternally conceived Wisdom that all things have been made. Human beings participate in a particular way in God’s eternally conceived Wisdom on account of their being made to the image of the Trinity, that is to say, by virtue of possessing the capacity to know and to

¹¹⁴ *STh* I, q. 35, a. 2: “Uno modo, in re eiusdem naturae secundum speciem, ut imago regis invenitur in filio suo. Alio modo, in re alterius naturae, sicut imago regis invenitur in denario. ”

¹¹⁵ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 1 ad 3: “[H]omo non solum dicitur imago, sed ad imaginem”

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*: “[P]er quod motus quidam tendentis in perfectionem designatur.”

love the triune God. As imperfect images that have been created through the Word Who is also the Image of the Father, they progress towards their perfection by imitating the example and words of the Incarnate Word.

The capacity to know and love the triune God and the movement towards perfection is actualized by grace, that is to say, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit configures the believer to Christ since He receives the Son's divine nature (along with that of the Father) in proceeding from Him. In other words, He configures the *imago Dei* to the Word, that is to say, to God's eternally conceived Wisdom. Adapting Emery's words, we can say that since the Spirit holds His being and His action from the Son – as well as from the Father – the effect of the Holy Spirit is to render men like the Son, Who is God's eternally conceived Wisdom.¹¹⁷ It is to the Person of the Holy Spirit that we now turn our attention, focusing our attention on the two proper names ascribed to Him, namely Love and Gift. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son as Love. By this Love they love not only each other but they love us as well. Just as in general love grounds the idea of gift since love is the first gift by which all other gifts are given, so too the name 'Gift' is proper to the Holy Spirit: as the Love between the Father and the Son, He proceeds as the first Gift in virtue of which all other gifts are bestowed on us.

4.2 The Holy Spirit as Love and Gift

In his discussion of whether "Love" is the proper name of the Holy Spirit, Thomas replies in the affirmative: Love is the proper name of the Holy Spirit when taken personally

¹¹⁷ See Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 139: "Since the Spirit holds his being and his action from the Son, the effect of the Holy Spirit is to render men like the Son-Truth."

just as “Word is the proper name of the Son.”¹¹⁸ In order to understand the reason for this name we must refer back to treatment of the processions near the beginning of Thomas’s treatment of the Trinity at *STh* q. 27. There are two processions in the Trinity, as we have seen: the Word processes by way of the intellect while Love processes by way of the will. The former procession is better known by us and it is therefore possible to find names that give relatively apt expression to our theological considerations about it. Thomas explains: “[W]hen a thing is understood by anyone, there results in the one who understands a conception of the object understood, which conception we call word.”¹¹⁹ It is possible to describe the mutual relation of the one who understands to the object that is understood by words such as “*to understand*”¹²⁰ At the same time other words have been found to express the procession of the intellectual conception, “namely, *to speak*, and *word*.”¹²¹ The word “*to understand*” pertains to the divine essence alone for it does not imply any relation to the Word that proceeds. In contrast, the term “*speak*” imports “the relation of the principle of the Word, [that is to say, the one who utters to the Word], to the Word Himself.”¹²²

Turning to love – which relates to the will as does understanding to the intellect – Thomas writes that “when anyone loves an object, a certain impression results, so to speak, of the thing loved in the affection of the lover.”¹²³ By virtue of this impression of the thing loved

¹¹⁸ *STh* I, q. 37 a. 1: “[N]omen amoris in divinis sumi potest et essentialiter et personaliter. Et secundum quod personaliter sumitur, est proprium nomen spiritus sancti; sicut verbum est proprium nomen filii.”

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*: “[E]x hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam intelligit, provenit quaedam intellectualis conceptio rei intellectae in intelligente, quae dicitur verbum.”

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*: “[I]ntelligere.”

¹²¹ *Ibid.*: “[I]psum dicere, et verbum.”

¹²² *Ibid.*: “[I]psum vero dicere ... importat habitudinem principii verbi ad verbum ipsum.”

¹²³ *Ibid.*: “[E]x hoc quod aliquis rem aliquam amat, provenit quaedam impressio, ut ita loquar, rei amatae in affectu amantis.”

in the affection of the lover “the object loved is said to be in the lover” just as “the thing understood is in the one who understands.”¹²⁴ Difficulties arise however when we seek to express “the relation of the impression or affection of the object loved, produced in the lover by the fact that he loves ... to the principle of that impression, or *vice versa*.”¹²⁵ The words ‘love’ and ‘dilection’ denote the relation of the lover to the object loved but fail to give expression to the mutual relations that arise from the procession of love from the will. Poverty of language nevertheless forces theological discourse to fall back on these words, namely ‘love’ and ‘dilection’. Analogous expressions with regard to the procession of the Word would be “*intelligence conceived, or wisdom begotten*.”¹²⁶

Thomas concludes his discussion of whether “Love” is a proper name of the Holy Spirit by distinguishing between the semantic import of the notion of ‘love’ as applied to the divine essence, on the one hand, and to the divine Persons, on the other hand. ‘Love’ and ‘to love’ are predicated of the divine essence in the same way as are ‘understanding’ and ‘to understand’ since in this respect “love means only the relation of the lover to the object loved.”¹²⁷ ‘Love’ however is also the name of the divine Person Who proceeds by way of love. In other words, “by *love* is understood the *love proceeding*.”¹²⁸ The opposite relation is denoted by the term ‘to love’, by which “is understood *the spiration of the love proceeding*”¹²⁹ by the Father and Son together, just as the Father is related to the Word as the

¹²⁴ Ibid.: “[A]matum dicitur esse in amante, sicut et intellectum in intelligente.”

¹²⁵ Ibid.: “Ex parte autem voluntatis, praeter diligere et amare, quae important habitudinem amantis ad rem amatam, non sunt aliqua vocabula imposita, quae importent habitudinem ipsius impressionis vel affectionis rei amatae, quae provenit in amante ex hoc quod amat, ad suum principium, aut e converso.”

¹²⁶ Ibid.: “[I]ntelligentiam conceptam, vel sapientiam genitam.”

¹²⁷ Ibid.: “[I]n amore vel dilectione non importatur nisi habitudo amantis ad rem amatam.”

¹²⁸ Ibid.: “[P]er amorem intelligatur amor procedens.”

¹²⁹ Ibid.: “[P]er diligere intelligatur spirare amorem procedentem.”

One Who speaks it. As Thomas states: “[F]rom the fact that the Father and the Son mutually love one another, it necessarily follows that this mutual Love, the Holy Ghost, proceeds from both.”¹³⁰ As Emery expresses the point under discussion:

Just as Thomas has identified the properly relative and therefore personal standing of the speaking of the Word, he likewise deepens his thought on love until he has established the “relative” reality of personal Love sent out by a fecund act of the Father and the Son, a mysterious impression, affection, or attraction of love which is in no way confused with an essential property of the divinity.¹³¹

The Father and the Son love not only each other by the Holy Spirit but also us.¹³² As Emery expresses this idea, “The Father and the Son are, in this regard, the principle of the act that the Holy Spirit performs, insofar as they communicate to him the divine power of acting.”¹³³ The substance of this idea is communicated by Thomas himself in *De potentia*: focusing on the Son, Thomas draws our attention to the assertion in Scripture that He works through the Holy Spirit – bearing in mind that the Father and the Son share the same essence.¹³⁴ Both the Father and the Son love us through the Holy Spirit. How precisely they do so and the implications of the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians are not drawn out in Thomas’s speculations in the *Summa* concerning either the inner life of the

¹³⁰ *STh* I, q. 37, a. 1, ad 3: “[E]x hoc ipso quod pater et filius se mutuo amant, oportet quod mutuus amor, qui est spiritus sanctus, ab utroque procedat.”

¹³¹ Gilles Emery, O.P., *Trinity in Aquinas* (Ypsilanti, Michigan: Sapientia Press, 2003), p. 188.

¹³² *STh* I, q. 37, a. 2: “[P]ater et filius dicuntur diligentes spiritu sancto, vel amore procedente, et se et nos.”

¹³³ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 137.

¹³⁴ See *De pot*, q. 10, a. 4.

Trinity or the Trinitarian missions. The questions that deal with grace, the theological virtue of charity, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are where the reader finds Thomas's working out of these points.

The following passage from Emery summarizes the foregoing discussion concerning 'Love' as a proper name of the Holy Spirit as well as positing the connection of Thomas's doctrine in the questions that deal with the Holy Trinity with his later treatment of the action of love of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers:

The Holy Spirit is properly and personally the Love who proceeds from the Father and the Son. Existing personally as Love (St. Thomas accounts for this personal property through the analogy of the "impression" or "affection" of love in the will), the Holy Spirit acts in the mode of the Love of the Father and the Son, in communicating to human beings the impulsion of love that gives them their union to God: He spreads charity, that is, communicates a participation in his personal property."¹³⁵

In this last sentence Emery hints at the connection that Thomas posits between the names Love and Gift. Thomas begins his analysis of the notion of gift by highlighting the relation between the giver of the gift and the one to whom it is given: "For it would not be given by anyone, unless it was his to give; and it is given to someone to be his."¹³⁶ Possession in turn implies the ability to use freely or to enjoy as we please and, in the case of the possession of a divine Person, this ability belongs to a rational creature alone. While other creatures can be moved by a divine Person, they cannot enjoy this Person. In contrast, the

¹³⁵ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 142.

¹³⁶ *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1: "[N]on enim daretur ab aliquo nisi esset eius; et ad hoc alicui datur, ut eius sit."

rational creature “sometimes” attains to the enjoyment of a divine Person and uses the effect thereof.¹³⁷ According to Rikhof, Thomas’s cautious remark “highlights that this type of relationship is not to be seen in terms of creation, but in terms of the history of salvation, of grace.”¹³⁸ Thomas’s later discussions about grace, the theological virtues and the other infused virtues, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, and the beatitudes are in effect an elaboration of the nature of this relationship to which the rational creature attains “when it is made partaker of the divine Word and Love proceeding, so as freely to know God truly and to love God rightly.”¹³⁹ Thomas concludes by emphasizing the gratuitous nature of the gift of a divine Person: the rational creature cannot acquire this gift by its own power. It is “given” to us from above.”¹⁴⁰

The notion of possessing what we can freely use or enjoy connects Thomas’s discussion of the Holy Spirit as Gift at *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1,¹⁴¹ with his treatment of the invisible mission of the divine Person according to the gift of sanctifying grace at *STh* I, q. 43, a. 3. In the latter passage Thomas reminds the reader that “we are said to possess only what we can freely use or enjoy.”¹⁴² In the case of the divine Person the power of enjoying is made possible only by sanctifying grace.¹⁴³ This gift of grace is given to us by the Holy Spirit Who

¹³⁷ Ibid: “Ad quod quandoque pertingit rationalis creatura.”

¹³⁸ Rikhof, “Theological Virtues,” p. 31.

¹³⁹ *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1: “[C]um sic fit particeps divini verbi et procedentis amoris, ut possit libere Deum vere cognoscere et recte amare.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: “[A]d hoc quod sic eam habeat, non potest propria virtute pervenire, unde oportet quod hoc ei desuper detur”

¹⁴¹ *STh* I, q. 38, a. 1: “Habere autem dicimur id quo libere possumus uti vel frui, ut volumus.”

¹⁴² *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3: “[I]llud solum habere dicimur, quo libere possumus uti vel frui.”

¹⁴³ Ibid.: “Habere autem potestatem fruendi divina persona, est solum secundum gratiam gratum facientem.”

is at the same time “given according to the gift of grace.”¹⁴⁴ For Thomas the reality of the gift of grace emanating from the Holy Spirit is expressed by the quotation from Rom V: “[T]he charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us.”¹⁴⁵ Rikhof’s comment concerning Thomas’s analysis of *donum* at *STh* I, q. 43, a. 3 is to the point: it “provides him with insights for a strong and maximal interpretation of the indwelling of the Spirit, the activity par excellence of the Spirit.”¹⁴⁶

Included in the notion of ‘gift’ is “the idea of a gratuitous donation.”¹⁴⁷ A true gift is not intended to be returned to the one who gives it. The reason for the gratuitousness of a gift is love since “we give something to anyone gratuitously forasmuch as we wish him well.”¹⁴⁸ Love has a certain precedence over gift since it constitutes the necessary condition for the donation of any other gift. All other gifts are an expression of love. In Thomas’s terms, love is “a first gift, through which all other free gifts are given.”¹⁴⁹ The application of the logic concerning gift and love to the inner life of the Trinity is evident: since the Holy Spirit proceeds as love from the Father and the Son, “He proceeds as the first gift.”¹⁵⁰ Thomas emphasizes this point as well as calling attention to its relevance for the *oikonomia* by way of a quotation from Augustine: “Hence Augustine says (*De Trin.* xv. 24): *By the gift, which is*

¹⁴⁴ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 ad. 2: “[S]piritus sanctus datur secundum donum gratiae.”

¹⁴⁵ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 ad 2: *[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.*”

¹⁴⁶ Rikhof, “Theological Virtues,” p. 31.

¹⁴⁷ *STh* I, q. 38, a. 2: “[D]onum ...importat gratuitam donationem.”

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.: “Ratio autem gratuita donationis est amor, ideo enim damus gratis alicui aliquid, quia volumus ei bonum.”

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.: “[M]anifestum est quod amor habet rationem primi doni, per quod omnia dona gratuita donantur.”

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.: “[C]um spiritus sanctus procedat ut amor, sicut iam dictum est, procedit in ratione doni primi.”

the Holy Ghost, many particular gifts are portioned out to the members of Christ.”¹⁵¹ Rikhof states pithily the import of Thomas’s conclusions and quotation from Augustine: “The conclusion and the quotation in all its brevity shows the Holy Spirit to be the very core of the gifts and virtues.”¹⁵²

In concluding this section on the Holy Spirit as Love and Gift I wish to emphasize the connection between (1) the treatment in this chapter of the procession of the Holy Spirit as Love from the Father and the Son which is revealed to us through the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit according to grace and (2) the discussions of grace, faith, charity, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in chapters five, six, seven, and eight. As we will see, not only do *theologia* and *oikonomia* possess the same Trinitarian structure, the knowing and willing of the Christian disciple is shaped analogically according to the dynamics of the inner life of knowing and loving of the Holy Trinity. The graced presence of God to the mind’s faculties of intellect and will elevates their operation beyond what is possible for them in their unaided, natural state. The elements of Thomas’s Trinitarian theology covered in this chapter have engaged with the objective ground for this transformation of the human capacity for knowing and loving. Later chapters deal with the hermeneutical implications of this transformation for the believing human subject, that is to say, the implications for human knowing and loving. These implications, however, can make sense only in the light of the foregoing discussion of the inner life of the Trinity.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.: “Unde dicit Augustinus, XV de Trin., quod *per donum quod est spiritus sanctus, multa propria dona dividuntur membris Christi.*”

¹⁵² Rikhof, “Theological Virtues,” p. 32.

5. Conclusion

In the foregoing discussions of the Son and the Holy Spirit economic considerations have figured quite prominently just as it was impossible to avoid some reference to the inner life of the Trinity when dealing with the divine missions. This fact only serves to emphasize the fact that the grammar of *theologia* and *oikonomia* are identical. While the experience of the Trinity of Persons revealing Themselves to us is necessary in order for us to come to faith in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, this experience is at the same time structured according to grammar of the inner life of the triune God. Being made to the image of the Trinity renders us capable of this participation in God's own knowing and loving, into which we are drawn by the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The content and concerns of this chapter have therefore been intimately connected with those of the last chapter. Human beings are made to the image and likeness of God by virtue of their capacity, endowed by God, to know and to love Him. In other words, intellect and will are intrinsic to the image of God in human beings. The first chapter occupied itself with elucidating and drawing out the implications of Thomas's speculations concerning this doctrine. This chapter has turned its attention to the God to whose image we are made with a view to understanding both the logic of the Trinitarian processions in a way that is consistent with the unity of the divine essence and the invisible missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. The rationale for this approach resides in the fact that the divine missions and, by extension, the life of faith, charity, and wisdom in human beings, are governed by the logic of the inner life of the Trinity.

This chapter has also sought to highlight that, contrary to all too frequent misunderstandings on the part of contemporary theologians, for Thomas the Trinity of the *oikonomia* and the Trinity of *theologia* are the same and are consequently determined by the same Trinitarian grammar. One of the purposes of Thomas's painstaking elaboration of his

Trinitarian theology is precisely to safeguard and to show forth the intimate relationship between *oikonomia* and *theologia*: the *missiones*, both visible and invisible, take place according to the distinction of Persons according to relations of origin. It is only on the basis of the missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit that the human intellect is illumined and assimilated to the Son by the Gift of wisdom and that the will is assimilated to the Holy Spirit by the gift of charity.¹⁵³ The growth of man *ad imaginem Dei* entails an ever greater participation in the life of the Trinity only because God first comes to him by grace. The following depiction of the Thomist and Augustinian Trinitarian theology by Karl Rahner is simply far wide of the mark when applied to Thomas:

[T]he treatise on the Holy Trinity occupies a rather isolated position in the total dogmatic structure. To put it bluntly (and naturally with some exaggeration and generalization): When this dogmatic treatise is concluded, the subject never comes up again. Its function in the whole dogmatic structure is only dimly seen. This mystery seems to have been communicated only for its own sake. Even after its communication, *as a reality* it remains locked within itself.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Throughout I use ‘Gift’ with a capital ‘g’ in order to refer to the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. I use the lower case spelling according to its broader signification.

¹⁵⁴ This translation is by Jeremy D. Wilkins, “Method, Order, and Analogy in Trinitarian Theology: “Karl Rahner’s Critique of the “Psychological” Approach,” *The Thomist* 74 (2010), 567. Wilkins criticizes Joseph Donceel’s translation of Rahner’s work, *The Trinity* (New York: Crossroad, 1997). On the erroneous interpretation of Thomas’s Trinitarian theology see also, for example, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and the Christian Life* (Chicago: Harper Collins, 1991), p. 145: “Thomas Aquinas’ doctrine of God is frequently held out as the paradigm instance of the separation of *theologia* from *oikonomia*. Karl Rahner bluntly criticized Thomas and scholasticism in general for developing a doctrine of the Trinity that is focused on intradivine life, to the virtual exclusion of the activity of the persons in the economy of salvation.”

In later chapters we will examine in greater detail the implications of the divine indwelling in the soul by the grace of the Holy Spirit for human knowing and willing. At this juncture, however, we must acquire a deeper appreciation of Thomas's teaching concerning the human intellect and will. Such an appreciation will provide and clarify the conceptual resources required for the elaboration of a theological hermeneutics of knowing and willing. This way of proceeding concurs with Thomas's oft quoted dictum that grace perfects nature.¹⁵⁵ With regard to the present project, it is necessary first to establish the hermeneutical significance of the dynamics of natural knowing and willing as a prelude to gaining some insight into the hermeneutical significance of the dynamics of supernatural knowing and willing.

¹⁵⁵ *STh* I, q. 62 a. 5: "[G]ratia perficit naturam." See also, *In IV Sent*, d. 2 q. 1 a. 4 qa. 2 s.c. 1; *De malo* q. 2 a.

CHAPTER III

THE INTERINVOLVEMENT OF INTELLECT AND WILL

In chapter one, we examined Thomas's doctrine concerning man as made to the image of the Trinity. Man, on account of his being endowed with the faculties of intellect and will, is capable of knowing and loving God. Chapter two turned to the triune God in Whose image we are made. There we saw how Thomas's use of the analogy of knowing and loving enables him to offer an account of the Trinitarian relations in a way that is consistent with the simplicity of the divine essence and in keeping with the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having elaborated Thomas's thought concerning the inner Trinitarian life of knowing and loving – the primary analogue of all knowing and loving – and indicated how the grammar of intra-Trinitarian knowing and loving structures the missions of the Son and Holy Spirit since it is one and the same Trinity that is in question in both *theologia* and *oikonomia*, we turn in this chapter once again to the human analogue of knowing and loving.

Human beings are made to the image of the Trinity on account of the fact that they possess the faculties of intellect and will. Naturally, the relationship between the human intellect and will bears the impress of the Trinity since man has been created through the Word by the impulse of Love. We have seen that Love (the Holy Spirit) proceeds from the conceived Truth (the Word). The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Truth because He receives the Son's (as well as the Father's) essence in its fullness. In an analogous manner, the human will issues forth from the intellect and shares in its essence. Moreover, just as to breathe forth Love is intrinsic to the constitution of the Word so that the charity that is poured into our

souls by the Holy Spirit is required in order to understand the Truth, so too love is required if the mind in its natural workings is to grasp properly the truth of the things of this world.

The life of mind thus involves a synthesis of knowledge and love in which the intellect specifies the act of the will and the will imparts directionality to the activity of the intellect. Attainment of truth is not the fruit of a mechanical reasoning process that builds on the apprehension of the intellect; also required is right willing in order to give proper direction to the unfolding of reason. This chapter is concerned with a conceptual clarification of the relationship of dynamic reciprocity between intellect and will and with the implications of this relationship for the unfolding of knowledge and love. Since grace perfects nature, this chapter provides the basis for appreciating the transformation of human knowing and willing that is wrought by grace, which transformation is the subject of later chapters. It also provides the basis for understanding the hermeneutical implications of faith and charity since faith strengthens the intellect and charity strengthens the will. The discussions that follow are therefore pivotal in the structure of the overall argument of this book.

This chapter focuses on Thomas's treatment of intellect and will in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa*. As such it is concerned with his analysis of intellect and will on the level of creation or metaphysics. In terms of the discussion of chapter one, the present chapter offers an extended treatment of the *imago Dei* under the aspect of the likeness of analogy. Subsequent chapters deal with the *imago Dei* under the aspect of the likeness of conformation, that is to say, they deal with the concrete enactment of the intellect and will under the condition of grace whereby these faculties of knowing and loving are conformed *modo humano* to the life of Trinitarian knowing and loving.

After a brief consideration in section one of the concrete existential conditions of sin in which the operations of the intellect and will unfold, the second section of this chapter examines how the intellect and will are distinct from the essence of the soul and yet

nevertheless flow from it as from their principle. They are distinguished from each other by their objects: truth in the case of the intellect and goodness in the case of the will. Since truth lays claim to a logical priority over goodness, Thomas argues that the intellect is a higher power than the will. The second section in effect develops the ideas contained in the first one. In this regard, it contrasts the order of generation of the powers of the soul with the order of nature. Each order is the reverse of the other with one exception, namely that the intellect enjoys priority over the will both in the order of generation and in the order of nature. A consideration of both these orders serves to emphasize the intellectual nature of the will: it is characterized by intellectuality on account of its participation in the life of the intellect.

Section three turns to a consideration of the causality that intellect and will exercise on each other in order to elucidate further the nature of the relationship that obtains between them. In addition to its efficient causality in bringing forth the will, the intellect also furnishes the final cause of the will inasmuch as the good understood by it provides the will with its object, thereby moving it to its end. Formal and final causality are therefore intimately related: the end sought by an agent preexists in his intellect as a formal cause. It is however not only the case that the intellect moves the will; the will also moves the intellect and all the powers of the soul (with the exception of the vegetative powers) in the manner of an efficient cause. While the object of each of the other powers of the soul is its own particular good, that of the will is the good in general. The will, whose object is the good in general, therefore moves the intellect to its particular good, namely the truth. The upshot of this analysis is that a dynamic of mutual causation obtains between intellect and will. This dynamic of mutual causation is not without import in elucidating the hermeneutics of knowing and willing implicit in Thomas's thought.

Section four carries forward the foregoing analysis by introducing the notion of *circulatio*. In brief, the relationship between intellect and will can be construed in terms of

circular movement in which beginning and end are interchangeable. An exposition of these dynamics leads one to conclude that all knowledge contains love and vice versa. The necessity of right understanding and reasoning for right willing and vice versa becomes apparent. To be emphasized in the context of this study is the affective dimension of human knowledge.

In what follows it is important to note that Thomas places his treatment of intellect and will – and indeed, the human being in general – in the explicitly theological horizon constituted by the doctrine of man as *imago Dei*. Although we have been created in the image of God by virtue of our capacity to know and to love God, this image has been obscured by the effects of original sin. It is not part of the plan of this book to investigate the hermeneutical implications of sin as they can be discerned and elaborated on the basis of Thomas's writings. It is nevertheless imperative to recognize the concrete existential conditions of sin in which the operations of the intellect and will, as described by Thomas, unfold.

1. Sin and the life of intellect and will

In brief, the original justice that characterized the human condition before the Fall has been lost on account of the sin of Adam. By virtue of this original justice, reason exercised perfect political rule over the lower powers of the soul while itself being subject to and perfected by God.¹ As a consequence of the Fall the powers of the soul were deprived of

¹ For the notion of the political rule of reason over the sensitive appetite, see *STh* I, q. 81 a 3 ad 2: “[S]icut philosophus dicit in I politicorum, *est quidem in animali contemplari et despoticum principatum, et politicum, anima quidem enim corpori dominatur despotico principatu; intellectus autem appetitui, politico et regali ... Intellectus autem, seu ratio, dicitur principari irascibili et concupiscibili politico principatu, quia appetitus sensibilis habet aliquid proprium, unde potest reniti imperio rationis.*”

their proper order, “whereby they are naturally directed to virtue.”² On account of original sin the proper order of the four powers of the soul is undermined: in so far as reason is deprived of its order to the true, it is afflicted by the wound of ignorance; in so far as the will is deprived of its order to the good, it is afflicted by the wound of malice; in so far as the irascible power is deprived of its order to the arduous, it is afflicted by the wound of weakness; and, in so far as the concupiscible appetite is deprived of its order to the delectable, it is afflicted by the wound of concupiscence. Since the focus of this study is the intellect and will, I will restrict the remainder of these brief comments with regard to Thomas’s doctrine concerning original sin to these two faculties.

Having shown at *STh* I-II, q. 83 a. 1, that original sin inheres in the essence of the soul, Thomas proceeds in the next article to demonstrate that sin infects the will before the other powers. This point is predicated upon a consideration of the inclination of original sin to express itself in act, which inclination to act necessarily involves the powers of the soul. Since the will is the power in which is seated the first inclination to commit sin, it follows that “original sin regards first of all the will.”³ Against this position it might be objected that original sin infects the intellect before the other powers of the soul because the act of the intellect precedes that of the will since it is the intellect that furnishes the will with its object, namely the good as understood. Consequently, it seems that original sin must in the first instance infect the intellect.⁴ In response, Thomas admits that the intellect does indeed in one way precede the will by proposing its object to it. In another way, however, “the will

² *STh* I-II, q. 85 a. 3: “[Q]uo naturaliter ordinantur ad virtutem”

³ *STh* I-II, q. 83 a. 3: “Unde peccatum originale per prius respicit voluntatem.” See also *STh* I-II, qq. 1 and 2.

⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 83 a. 3, *obj.* 3.

precedes the intellect, in the order of motion to act, which motion pertains to sin.”⁵ In this response we encounter the idea of the interinvolvement of intellect and will, that is to say, the dynamics of reciprocal causality that they exercise on each other, an idea that will be expanded upon during the course of this chapter and one that is central to the overall argument of this book.

The deleterious effects of sin are however overcome by grace which in the unfolding of time restores and perfects the image of God, that is to say, it conforms the faculties of knowing and willing to the example of Christ and thereby brings the one so conformed into a greater participation in the Trinitarian life of knowing and loving. Chapter four deals with the conformation of the faculties of knowing and willing to the example of Christ while subsequent chapters focus on the greater participation of the human being in the Trinitarian life of knowing and loving by virtue of grace, the theological virtues, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

My reading of Aquinas thus concurs with that of Hütter, who rejects any attempt to read Aquinas’s metaphysical account of the judgment of *esse* “in an implicitly modern sense, that is, as an epistemology that is isolated from the concrete experience of the person who thinks, wills, and judges.”⁶ Human judgment is influenced by the conditions of concrete existence, which conditions include man’s situation between God as First Efficient Cause of all that exists and God as Final End of man’s striving for ultimate Beatitude as well as the reality of sin and its undermining effects on the operations of the intellect and will. As Hütter points out, Thomas addresses the relationship between intellect and will first by dealing with them separately as distinct powers of the soul in the *Prima Pars* and subsequently by

⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 83 a. 3 ad 3: “Alio vero modo voluntas praecedit intellectum, secundum ordinem motionis ad actum, quae quidem motio pertinet ad peccatum.”

⁶ Hütter, “The Directedness of Reasoning,” p. 173.

“inquiring into their concrete enactment under the condition of sin”⁷ in the *Secunda Pars*. This concrete enactment of the intellect and will under the condition of sin is at once their concrete enactment under the condition of grace.

Before offering an account of Thomas’s treatment of the faculties of intellect and will and of the relationship that obtains between them, a brief comment on the influence that the emotions/passions bring to bear on the operations of these faculties is in order since this influence also pertains to the existential conditions in which the life of intellect and will unfolds. As a rational animal man is constituted, as it were, “the horizon and boundary of spiritual and corporeal nature; he is as it were, the medium between both.”⁸ This status is due to his hylomorphic/psychosomatic constitution. This boundary condition has implications for the way in which he knows the true and wills the good. In brief, our ability to know and to love cannot be divorced from our bodily condition. We are not angelic beings. Nevertheless, while the emotions/passions, which issue from the conditions of human embodiment, exercise an important influence on the life of intellect and will, the focus of this present study does not allow a full blown study of this dynamic.⁹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ *In III Sent*, prol.: “[H]omo enim est quasi orizon et confinium spiritualis et corporalis naturae, ut quasi medium inter utrasque.” See also *ScG* II c. 68 [6]: “[A]nima intellectualis dicitur esse quasi quidam horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum, inquantum est substantia incorporea, corporis tamen forma.” A discussion of this theme is found in G. Verbeke, “Man as a ‘Frontier’,” in *Aquinas and Problems of his Time*, ed. by D. Verbeke and D. Verhelst (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1976), pp. 195-223.

⁹ For a recent book-length treatment of the emotions that engages significantly with their interaction with intellect and will see Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009).

2. Intellect and will as powers of the soul

Daniel Westberg tells us that “The split of human personality into various ‘faculties’ such as will, intellect, and emotion has led to problems and is now widely called in question.”¹⁰ Proponents of this view would find support in Thomas: Thomas emphasizes the unity of thought and will in action, going so far as to affirm that they include each other: “The will and the intellect mutually include one another: for the intellect understands the will and the will wills the intellect to understand.”¹¹ So, asks Westberg, why separate these functions? He continues: “Why not simply identify intellect and will and simply assert the essential unity of the human agent, refusing to divide the human personality at all into subcapacities such as reason and will?”¹² While such an approach might at first sight seem to fit in with Thomas’s conception of the human person as unitary in nature, he has good reasons, as Westberg points out, for resolutely rejecting it.

Drawing upon the distinction between essence and action, Thomas argues that the intellect must be considered a power of the soul and not its essence. If the intellect were the essence of the soul it would be the immediate principle of operation. Indeed, operation itself would be its being, “for as power is to operation as its act, so is the essence to being.”¹³ In other words, the soul would always be actually understanding. Only in God, however, is the action of understanding identical with His very Being. In other words, “in God alone is His

¹⁰ Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 50.

¹¹ *STh* I, q. 16 a. 4 ad 1: “[V]oluntas et intellectus mutuo se includunt, nam intellectus intelligit voluntatem, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere.”

¹² Westberg, *Right Practical Reason*, p. 51.

¹³ *STh* I, q. 79 a. 1: “[S]icut enim potentia se habet ad operationem ut ad suum actum, ita se habet essentia ad esse.”

intellect His essence.”¹⁴ God knows all things in His eternal act of knowing. In intellectual creatures, in contrast, the intellect is a power; in other words, their capacity to understand is distinct from the essence of the soul itself. If this were not the case, that is to say, if to understand were the essence of the soul it would always be actually understanding, as already stated. Put in more general terms, “if the very essence of the soul were the immediate principle of operation, whatever has a soul would always have actual vital actions, as that which has a soul is always an actually living thing.”¹⁵ As Thomas curtly remarks, however, “what has a soul is not always actual with respect to its vital operations.”¹⁶ In particular, we are not engaged in unceasing intellectual activity. As Robert Pasnau remarks, “Sometimes we are thinking, and sometimes we are not.”¹⁷

The *Quaestio disputata De anima* further elaborates Thomas’s position. He posits that on the part of the agent the immediate principle of operation is an accidental form, which accidental form acts in virtue of the substantial form as if it were an instrument thereof.¹⁸ The essence of the soul is not the immediate principle of operation; it acts, rather, through mediating accidental principles. Thus, the powers of the soul are not its essence but rather

¹⁴ Ibid.: “[I]n solo Deo intellectus est eius essentia.”

¹⁵ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 1: “Si ergo ipsa essentia animae esset immediatum operationis principium, semper habens animam actu haberet opera vitae; sicut semper habens animam actu est vivum.”

¹⁶ Ibid.: “Invenitur autem habens animam non semper esse in actu operum vitae.”

¹⁷ Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 155.

¹⁸ *QD De anima* 12: “[N]ecesse est quod ex parte agentis id quod immediate agit sit forma accidentalis correspondens dispositioni materiae. Sed oportet ut forma accidentalis agat in virtute formae substantialis, quasi instrumentum eius.”

properties of it.¹⁹ As Pasnau puts it, “capacities are midway between a thing’s essence and its operations.”²⁰ The same conclusion can be reached by considering the diversity of actions of the soul. These are of different kinds and cannot be reduced to a single immediate principle. Actions and emotions must be attributed to different principles.²¹ Hence, since the essence of the soul is a single principle, it cannot be the immediate principle of all its actions; rather, it is necessary to posit several different powers corresponding to its different actions.²²

The classification of the soul’s powers as accidents is inspired by Aristotle’s *Categories*, according to which everything must be either essential or accidental. As Pasnau expresses this view, “these two classes are both mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive.”²³ There is however another sense, inspired by the *Topics*, in which the powers of the soul are not deemed to be accidents.²⁴ In this work, Aristotle distinguishes between species, genus, differentia, proprium, and accident. According to the distinction set forth here, the soul’s powers are not accidents, but rather *propria*. In this regard, Thomas writes: “For the *proper*

¹⁹ Ibid: “Manifestum est ergo quod ipsa essentia animae non est principium immediatum suarum operationum, sed operatur mediantibus principiis accidentalibus; unde potentiae animae non sunt ipsa essentia animae, sed proprietates eius.”

²⁰ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, p. 151. Note that the terms *powers* and *capacities* are used interchangeably in the literature.

²¹ *QD De anima* 12: “Deinde hoc apparet ex ipsa diversitate actionum animae, quae sunt genere diversae, et non possunt reduci ad unum principium immediatum; cum quaedam earum sint actiones et quaedam passionēs, et aliis huiusmodi differentiis differant, quae oportet attribui diversis principiis.”

²² Ibid.: “Et ita, cum essentia animae sit unum principium, non potest esse immediatum principium omnium suarum actionum; sed oportet quod habeat plures et diversas potentias correspondentes diversitati suarum actionum.”

²³ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, p. 155.

²⁴ *Topics* I, 5 (102a18-30).

does not belong to the essence of a thing, but is caused by the essential principles of the species; wherefore it is a medium between the essence and accident thus understood.”²⁵

When Thomas speaks of intellect and will as accidents of the soul, therefore, he means that they are accidents which are caused by the soul’s essence: “Whence it is clear that all the powers of the soul, whether their subject be the soul alone, or the composite, flow from the essence of the soul, as from their principle.”²⁶

The difference between intellect and will arises from the difference between their respective objects. As we will see, truth is the object of the intellect, the good is the object of the will. Since a power is directed to an act, we look to the act in order to discern the nature of a particular power. According as the nature of the act is diversified, so too is that of the power. Now, as Thomas asserts, “the nature of an act is diversified according to the various natures of the objects.”²⁷ It follows therefore that the powers are also of necessity distinguished not only by their acts but also by their objects. In this light, Pasnau’s comments to the effect that one might speak of a real distinction between the powers of the soul so long as by this “one might mean only that the distinction is not merely *conceptual*”²⁸ seem

²⁵ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 1 ad 5: “Proprium enim non est de essentia rei, sed ex principiis essentialibus speciei causatur, unde medium est inter essentiam et accidens sic dictum.”

²⁶ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 6: “Compositum autem est in actu per animam. Unde manifestum est quod omnes potentiae animae, sive subiectum earum sit anima sola, sive compositum, fluunt ab essentia animae sicut a principio.”

²⁷ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 3: “Ratio autem actus diversificatur secundum diversam rationem obiecti.”

²⁸ Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, p. 425, n. 5. Pasnau continues: “But it’s peculiar and misleading that Aquinas’s followers regularly embrace Scotus’s way of characterizing the theory (see *Reportatio* II. 16). Pietro Caramello, editor of the Marietti edition of *ST* Ia, appends to 54.3c a note intended to clarify Aquinas’s position: “Every created substance, therefore, acts by means of an operative capacity that is *really distinct* from it.” Suttor, in a note to his translation of 77, 1, writes that “there is a plurality of powers, *really distinct* from the soul and from each other” ... These remarks suggest that Aquinas recognizes and rejects the possibility of a

legitimate. Thomas further elaborates his position with due reference to the active and passive powers of the soul, for every operation of the soul is either one or the other. The object of a passive power furnishes its principle and moving cause – colour, for example, is “the principle of vision, inasmuch as it moves the sight.”²⁹ Thus, as Thomas states elsewhere, the objects of the passive powers are active with regard to these powers.³⁰ On the other hand, the object of an active power is an end as, for example, “the object of the power of growth is perfect quantity, which is the end of growth.”³¹ Hence, the objects of the active powers are the effects of the powers themselves,³² just as the end of building is the house which is built.³³

Westberg observes that Thomas’s teaching concerning the powers of the soul “allows intellect and will (and sensation) to be moved by reality (‘omne ens movetur ab alio’), but also to be active.”³⁴ In other words, these powers of the soul are endowed with a double aspect when considered in relation to the object: the object both activates a power and furnishes its end. Westberg offers a concrete illustration:

middle ground (a formal distinction) somewhere between being identical and being *really* different. This flies in the face of what Aquinas actually says here: for him the question is simply whether the soul’s essence and its capacities are or are not the same” (ibid., pp. 425-6, n. 5. Pasnau’s own emphasis).

²⁹ Ibid.: “[C]olor enim in quantum movet visum, est principium visionis.”

³⁰ *SDA* II, lect. 6 n. 7: “Obiecta quidem potentiarum passivarum comparantur ad operationes earum ut activa, quia reducunt potentias in actum, sicut visibile visum, et omne sensibile sensum.”

³¹ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 3: “[A]ugmentativae virtutis obiectum est quantum perfectum, quod est finis augmenti.”

³² *SDA* II, lectio 6 n.7: “Obiecta enim potentiarum activarum, sunt operata ipsarum.”

³³ Ibid.: “[S]icut domus quae aedificatur, est finis aedificationis.”

³⁴ Westberg, *Right Practical Reason*, p. 52.

Say there is a bicycle; it can be noticed by beings which have powers of sight or touch. As an existing object it is what activates the perceptive powers of a soul (no one can see a bicycle which is not there). As an object of the intellect the bicycle can now be examined and understood and as such is the *finis* of the activated intellectual power. It can also be seen as something desirable (for riding, or for possessing) and thus an object of the will.³⁵

Thus, the object both activates the power and acts as end in relation to the power now activated.

Truth and goodness are the objects of the intellect and will respectively, while the relationship obtaining between these two powers is determined by their respective objects. When discussing whether the good is logically prior to the true Thomas argues, on the basis of the fact that knowledge precedes appetite, that “since the true regards knowledge, but the good regards the appetite, the true must be prior in idea to the good.”³⁶ The logical priority of the true over the good is reflected by a corresponding priority, absolutely speaking, of the intellect over the will. In other words, if we consider the intellect and will with regard to themselves, as distinct from with regard to other things, then the intellect is a higher power than the will.³⁷ The reason Thomas adduces is as follows: the object of the intellect is “the very idea of the appetible good,” while “the appetible good, the idea of which is in the

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *STh* I, q. 16 a. 4: “[C]um verum respiciat cognitionem, bonum autem appetitum, prius erit verum quam bonum secundum rationem.”

³⁷ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 3: “Consideratur autem aliquid tale simpliciter, prout est secundum seipsum tale, secundum quid autem, prout dicitur tale secundum respectum ad alterum. Si ergo intellectus et voluntas considerentur secundum se, sic intellectus eminentior invenitur.”

intellect, is the object of the will.”³⁸ In other words, it is necessary that the intellect first of all discern the character of good in an object before that object can move the will. Nothing can be willed unless it first be apprehended by the intellect. As Thomas states in his treatment of the Trinitarian processions, “nothing can be loved unless it is conceived in the intellect.”³⁹ Considered in itself, the object of the intellect is simpler and more absolute than the object of the will. In this regard, one ought not to ignore the elucidatory significance of Trinitarian theology for anthropology, as we pointed out in chapter two. With regard to the Trinitarian processions, as we know, Love proceeds from the Word conceived. Since human beings are made to the image of the Trinity it is therefore fitting that we should accord a priority, of intellect over will. At the same time, purely philosophical reasoning can establish the same conclusion. Once again we witness in Thomas’s thought a harmony of faith and reason.

Thus far we have seen that for Thomas the intellect, that is to say, the power to understand is a capacity that is distinct from the essence of the soul itself. The same situation obtains with regard to the will and to the other powers of the soul. The powers of the soul do not constitute its essence but are rather properties of it. Nevertheless, while intellect and will do not constitute the essence of the soul, they issue from its essence. They “flow from the essence of the soul, as from their principle.”⁴⁰ Intellect and will, like all the powers of the soul, are differentiated according to their objects – which objects both activate them and furnish their ends. The object of the intellect is truth; that of the will is goodness. Since the true enjoys a logical priority over the good, so too does the intellect lay claim to being a

³⁸ Ibid., “[O]biectum intellectus est ipsa ratio boni appetibilis; bonum autem appetibile, cuius ratio est in intellectu, est obiectum voluntatis.”

³⁹ *STh* I, q. 27 a. 3 ad 3: “[N]ihil enim potest voluntate amari, nisi sit in intellectu conceptum.”

⁴⁰ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 6: “[O]mnes potentiae animae ... fluunt ab essentia animae sicut a principio.”

higher power than the will since it is necessary to see the character of goodness in an object before that object can move the will.

This last notion concerning the appetible good, that is to say, the object of the will, might give the impression that the direction of influence between intellect and will is one way: the activity of the intellect determines the activity of the will. Thomas however construes their relationship to be more complex and dynamic: what is involved is a relationship of mutual engagement between them. In order to deepen our understanding of this relationship of mutual engagement it is useful first of all to consider its foundations in the emanation of both of these powers from the essence of the soul. The emanation of powers from the essence of the soul can be viewed according to the order of their generation as well as according to the order of nature. With regard to the former order the nutritive powers precede the sensitive, which in turn precede the intellect. According to the order of nature however the intellectual powers have priority. When it comes to the order of the intellectual powers themselves the situation changes since the intellect has priority over the will both in the order of generation and in the order of nature. Since the intellect is the effective principle of the will it follows that the will shares in the intellect's essence: hence the definition of the will as an intellectual appetite. Moreover, since the intellect constitutes the principles of the will's acts, it enjoys a certain knowledge of these.

3. The emanation of intellect and will from the essence of the soul

Thomas states that "the essence of the soul is the cause of all its powers, as their end and as their active principle."⁴¹ Included in this assertion are the intellect and will: they are both rooted in the soul as their origin. As already explained, like all the other powers that

⁴¹ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 6 ad 2: "[E]ssentia animae est causa omnium potentiarum sicut finis et sicut principium activum."

issue from the essence of the soul, they are related to the soul as accidental forms to substantial form. As Thomas tells us, “an active accidental form is to the substantial form of the agent (for instance, heat compared to the form of fire) as the power of the soul is to the soul.”⁴² The accidental forms owe their being to the substantial form which is their ground.⁴³ The actual being of the accidental forms, reason and will, owes its origin to the more original being of the substantial form which is the soul.

The soul cannot be considered as an efficient cause in the usual sense, however. As Tibor Horvath points out, it is rather a *principium activum*, an active principle which, as the origin of both intellect and will, establishes a relationship of kinship between them analogous to the relationship obtaining between siblings on account of their having the same parent.⁴⁴ This kinship is predicated on the fact that “the emanation of proper accidents from their subject is not by way of transmutation, but by a certain natural resultance.”⁴⁵ In other words, just as proper accidents share in the nature of the being in which they inhere, so too do intellect and will share in the nature of the soul in the sense of being a natural expression of its essence.

⁴² *STh* I, q. 77 a. 1 ad 3: “[S]ic se habet forma accidentalis activa ad formam substantialem agentis (ut calor ad formam ignis), sicut se habet potentia animae ad animam.”

⁴³ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 6: “[A]ctualitas formae accidentalis causatur ab actualitate subiecti.”

⁴⁴ See Tibor Horvath, S.J., *Caritas est in Ratione: Die Lehre des hl. Thomas über die Einheit der intellektiven und affectiven Begnadung des Menschen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1966), p. 35. This section and the next are indebted to Horvath’s insights.

⁴⁵ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 6 ad 3: “[E]manatio propriorum accidentium a subiecto non est per aliquam transmutationem; sed per aliquam naturalem resultationem.” For a treatment of the analogy of the “resultance” of colour from light in order to elucidate the emanation of proper accidents from their subject,” see Horvath, *Caritas est in Ratione*, pp. 35-38.

Just as the power of the soul flows from its essence, “not by a transmutation, but by a certain natural resultance” which is simultaneous with the soul itself, so too does one power emanate from another also by “a certain natural resultance.”⁴⁶ Consequently, as Horvath points out, when we compare the two powers of intellect and will with each other we encounter the same relationship between them as obtains between them and the soul.⁴⁷ In other words, just as intellect and will issue from the essence of the soul so too must one of these powers issue from the other. According to Thomas, “Since the soul is one, and the powers are many; and since a number of things that proceed from one must proceed in a certain order; there must be a certain order among the powers of the soul.”⁴⁸ Thomas tells us that this dependence of one power on another can be viewed in two ways: firstly, according to the order of nature, whereby perfect things are prior to imperfect things; and secondly, according to the order of generation and time, whereby what is perfect develops from what is imperfect.⁴⁹

The order of nature dictates that the intellectual powers are the principle of the others in the manner of an end and active principle. Thus, the senses exist for the sake of intelligence. Indeed, Thomas regards the senses as participating imperfectly in intelligence. As such they stand to intelligence as imperfect to perfect.⁵⁰ In this sense, intelligence is prior to the senses. Similarly, the sensitive powers are prior to the nutritive. The order of

⁴⁶ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 7 ad 1: “[S]icut potentia animae ab essentia fluit, non per transmutationem, sed per naturalem quandam resultationem, et est simul cum anima; ita est etiam de una potentia respectu alterius.”

⁴⁷ Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, p. 48: “Wenn wir die zwei Vermögen, den Verstand und den Willen, miteinander vergleichen, finden wir eine ähnliche Beziehung zueinander, wie jene, die sie zur Seele haben.”

⁴⁸ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 4: “[C]um anima sit una, potentiae vero plures; ordine autem quodam ab uno in multitudinem procedatur; necesse est inter potentias animae ordinem esse.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *STh* I, q. 77 a. 7.

generation is the reverse of that of nature. In other words, considered from the point of view of generation the powers of the nutritive soul precede those of the sensitive soul, while those of the sensitive soul are prior to those of the intellectual soul. In this perspective, “the more imperfect powers precede the others in the order of generation, for the animal is generated before the man.”⁵¹ Thomas’s formulation of this point is of course conditioned by the scientific knowledge of his time. In contrast, as R.J. Hennessey comments, “Modern genetics point to the complex organisation present at the moment of conception, and so to a basis for affirming the temporal coincidence of conception and human animation.”⁵² Nevertheless, it still remains that in terms of external developmental expression, the human fetus does indeed move through the nutritive and sensitive stages before the conditions for intellectual activity (as distinct from its actual exercise) appear. Thomas’s ascription of the priority of the intellectual powers over the sensitive and nutritive also retains its force. The intrinsic principle of change that guides the development of the fetus, is clearly ordered towards the flowering of what is specifically human, namely the intellectual powers.

This priority according to the order of nature and according to the order of generation in time obtains not only between the power of intelligence and the senses. It applies also in the case of the relationship between intellect and will: the intellect enjoys priority over the will both according to the order of nature and according to the order of generation. There is a little puzzle that must be resolved in this regard, for the act of the will in the natural order follows upon the act of the intellect in the same way as the intellect follows sense. Since in

⁵¹ Ibid.: “[I]mperfectiores potentiae sunt priores in via generationis, prius enim animal generatur quam homo.”

⁵² R. J. Hennessey, editor and translator of the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 48: III, pp. 1-6. On the question of the ontological status of the human embryo see Teresa Iglesias, *IVF and Justice: Moral, Social and Legal Issues related to Human in vitro Fertilization* (London: The Linacre Centre for Healthcare Ethics, 1990), pp. 85-109.

the order of nature we observe a progression from imperfect to perfect, it seems that the will is more noble and perfect than the intellect. Thomas responds to this objection as follows:

What precedes in order of generation and time is less perfect: for in one and the same thing potentiality precedes act, and imperfection precedes perfection. But what precedes absolutely and in the order of nature is more perfect: for thus act precedes potentiality. And in this way the intellect precedes the will, as the motive power precedes the thing movable, and as the active precedes the passive; for good which is understood moves the will.⁵³

In the case both of the order of nature and of the order of generation the intellect enjoys priority over the will. Its priority over the will according to the order of nature is explained in terms of act and potentiality: the intellect, in apprehending the end, is actualized by it; the end as apprehended by the intellect then moves the will and so the intellect is related to the will as its final cause. The will remains in potency to the end apprehended by the intellect until it has actually attained it in extramental reality. Hence the intellect is described as a motive power and the will as something movable, the intellect as active and the will as passive – for “good which is understood moves the will.” Hence, although the will issues from the essence of the soul by means of the intellect, the intellect enjoys priority over the will not only according to the order of generation but also according to the order of nature.

⁵³ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 3 ad 2: “[I]llud quod est prius generatione et tempore, est imperfectius, quia in uno et eodem potentia tempore praecedit actum, et imperfectio perfectionem. Sed illud quod est prius simpliciter et secundum naturae ordinem, est perfectius, sic enim actus est prior potentia. Et hoc modo intellectus est prior voluntate, sicut motivum mobili, et activum passivo, bonum enim intellectum movet voluntatem.”

Horvath elucidates the significance of the emergence of the will from intellect by way of comparison with the order of procession of the powers from the essence of the soul: in both cases an effective principle partially communicates its own power, its proper nature. In a certain sense therefore the new form which comes forth, namely the will, is *connaturalis* with the understanding on account of sharing in the same essence.⁵⁴ This sharing in the same essence is reflected in the definition of the will as an intellectual appetite (*appetitus intellectualis*). The will is intellectual by nature: to regard it as in some way subject to the external control of the intellect is a misunderstanding; it is rather intrinsically characterized by intellectuality on account of its participation therein. It is this participation of will in the being of the intellect that establishes a certain likeness (*similitudo*) between them.

The origins of both intellect and will in the substance of the soul is not without epistemic significance. It might seem that the act of the will cannot be known by the intellect since they are distinct powers, “For nothing is known by the intellect, unless it be in some way present in the intellect.”⁵⁵ This conclusion would be legitimate if the intellect and the will were simply different powers devoid of any intimate connection. Both intellect and will are however “rooted in the same substance of the soul” and the intellect is in a certain way the principle of the will. The upshot of this common rootedness in the same substance of the soul and of the fact that the will issues from the intellect is that “what is in the will is, in a

⁵⁴ See Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, p. 50: “Durch den Vergleich mit der Wesenheit der Seele zeigt es sich, daß es sich wieder um ein wirkliches Hervorgehen handelt, in welchem ein wirkendes Prinzip seine eigene Kraft, seine eigene Natur teilweise mitteilt. So entsteht eine neue Form, der Wille, der in einem bestimmten Sinne von gleicher Wesenheit *con-naturalis* mit dem Verstand ist.”

⁵⁵ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 *obj.* 1: “Nihil enim cognoscitur ab intellectu, nisi sit aliquo modo praesens in intellectu.”

certain way, also in the intellect.”⁵⁶ In other words, the unitary nature of the soul – of which intellect and will are powers – means that the intellect necessarily understands the act of the will. What is in question here is obviously not knowledge of a conceptual order. In order to explicate the kind of knowledge involved here Thomas draws upon causal considerations. He points out that the act of the will, as an affection of the soul, is not said to be in the intellect on the basis of similitude only, like bodies, nor by being present in its subject, as the arts; it is rather in the intellect “as the thing caused is in its principle, which contains some notion of the thing caused.”⁵⁷ As we have already seen, the intellect acts as a motive power in moving the will, exerting this motive power in terms of final causality. It thus possesses a certain knowledge of the will’s act in the same way that any cause virtually contains its effect. In other words, “the intelligible inclination, which is the act of the will, is in the intelligent subject intelligibly, as in its principle and proper subject.”⁵⁸ The act of will is therefore understood by the intellect “both inasmuch as one knows that one wills; and inasmuch as one knows the nature of this act, and consequently, the nature of its principle which is the habit or power.”⁵⁹ To know that one wills is common to all rational agents although most may well be unable to formulate this knowledge in the terms employed by Thomas. Indeed, even in the absence of the concept of the will itself it is possible for a human being to know the act of his will. To know the nature of the act of willing and the nature of its principle, however,

⁵⁶ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 1: “[C]um utrumque radicetur in una substantia animae, et unum sit quodammodo principium alterius, consequens est ut quod est in voluntate, sit etiam quodammodo in intellectu.”

⁵⁷ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 3: “[S]icut principiatum in principio, in quo habetur notio principiatum.”

⁵⁸ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4: “[I]nclinatio intelligibilis, quae est actus voluntatis, est intelligibiliter in intelligente, sicut in principio et in proprio subiecto.”

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* : “[A]ctus voluntatis intelligitur ab intellectu, et in quantum aliquis percipit se velle; et in quantum aliquis cognoscit naturam huius actus, et per consequens naturam eius principii, quod est habitus vel potentia.”

requires further reflection on this common experience and those who attain to this knowledge belong to a more restricted group of people. The important point here, however, concerns the knowledge of the act of the will possessed by all rational beings.

In conclusion, both intellect and will issue from the essence of the soul. They are related to the soul as accidental forms to substantial form and, as such, owe their being to the soul. Intellect and will are natural expressions of the essence of the soul, which is their active principle. According to the order of generation the nutritive powers precede the sensitive which, in turn, are prior to the intellectual. The order of nature however reverses the order of generation. The order of intellect and will appears to constitute an exception in this regard for the intellect enjoys priority over the will both in the order of generation and in the order of nature: the will emanates from the essence of the soul by means of the intellect and yet the intellect furnishes the final cause of the will's activity. Finally, because the will can be said to be in the intellect in the way in which a "thing caused is in its principle," the intellect enjoys a certain knowledge of the will's acts.⁶⁰

At this point in our examination of the relationship between intellect and will it is clear that the will is intellectual in essence since it emerges from the intellect while the intellect enjoys a certain knowledge of the will's acts in the same way that an effect is virtually contained within its cause. The influence that intellect and will exert on each other, however, extends further than the will sharing in the nature of the intellect and the intellect having a certain knowledge of the will's acts. In the genesis of human action there obtains a relationship of reciprocal causality between intellect and will, a relationship which the next section treats. So intimate is the relationship between intellect and will, as we will see, that we can speak about the mutual containment of the acts of intellect and will.

⁶⁰ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 3: "[S]icut principiatum in principio, in quo habetur notio principiatum."

4. The dynamics of reciprocal causality between intellect and will⁶¹

Thomas refers to the will being in the intellect “as the thing caused is in its principle,”⁶² thereby implying a relationship between the intellect and will which is established on the basis of the efficient causality of the intellect which brings forth the will.⁶³ In delineating the causality of the intellect, however, Thomas does not restrict himself to efficient causality. He also invokes the notion of final causality. Thus, when discussing whether the will moves the intellect, he first of all observes that a thing can be said to move as an end “as when the end moves the agent.” Thus, argues Thomas, “the intellect moves the will, because the good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end.”⁶⁴

The end proper to any particular thing must in no way be conceived as purely external to its nature. It moves towards its end as perfective of its nature. It is teleologically ordered to its perfecting end in virtue of an internal principle: the end draws it as that which is capable

⁶¹ It is not possible in the context of this work to undertake a detailed examination of Thomas’s doctrine concerning the complex relationship between the intellect and will from the beginning to the end of his career. Since the argument of this book centres on his most mature teaching in the *Summa*, I will continue to focus on this text in order to tease out the implications of the mutual influence that intellect and will exert on each other. For an interpretation of this thorny question, an interpretation that I endorse, see D. Westberg, “Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will?” *The Thomist* 58 (1994), pp. 41-60. See also Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), pp. 18-53. For an influential exposition of an alternative account, see James F. Keenan, S.J., *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992).

⁶² *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 3: “[S]icut principiatum in principio.”

⁶³ It is crucial to understand that causality operates analogously at the different levels of being.

⁶⁴ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “[I]ntellectus movet voluntatem, quia bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis, et movet ipsam ut finis.” See also *STh* I-II, q. 91; *De ver* q. 22 a. 12; and *De malo* q. 6 a. 1.

of actualizing its potentiality. The situation of the will presents us with a similar dynamic. As J. de Finance puts it: “[T]he will is moved in so far as its natural inclination towards the good or the perfection of the subject is at once actuated and specified by the representation of an object which offers itself as perfective of the subject ... The movement of the will by the object is therefore not purely extrinsic: it supposes an internal principle, an originating impulse issuing from the will.”⁶⁵ Thus, the end proposed to the will by the intellect cannot be regarded as a principle imposed violently from without but rather as a principle to which the will is intrinsically inclined. Indeed, this principle corresponds to the nature of the will because of the prior participation of the will in the intellect.⁶⁶

It must be borne in mind that we are here dealing with the practical intellect. Thus, while in theoretical knowledge the intellect receives the form of some already existing thing into itself,⁶⁷ in practical knowledge the form first exists in the intellect and is then placed in things. In practical knowledge the agent first conceives the form in his intellect and then applies it to art or action. It is in this sense that we are to understand Thomas’s assertion in the *De malo* that the “object of the intellect belongs first and chiefly to the genus of formal

⁶⁵ “[L]a volonté est mue en tant que son inclination naturelle vers le bien ou la perfection du sujet est à la fois actée et spécifiée par la présentation d’un objet qui s’offre comme « perfectif » du sujet ... La motion de la volonté par l’objet n’est donc pas purement extrinsèque: elle suppose un principe interne, un élan originaire de la volonté.” J. de Finance, “La motion du bien,” *Gregorianum* 39 (1958), pp. 35-6. My trans.

⁶⁶ See Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, pp. 53-4: “Wenn also der Verstand wie ein Zweck den Willen bewegt, so bedeutet das, daß der Verstand dem Willen gegenüber nicht ein außerhalb des Willens stehendes tyrannisch leitendes Prinzip ist, sondern ein Prinzip, zu dem der Wille eine innere Hinneigung hat; ein Prinzip, welches der Natur und den Eigenschaften des Willens entspricht, weil der Wille am Verstand schon teilgenommen hat.”

⁶⁷ This form may exist in reality or in the imagination. In either case theoretical reasoning aims to understand the form in question. See *STh* I, q. 79 a. 11.

cause.”⁶⁸ Just as a builder conceives the form of a house in his intellect and then applies that form to matter by constructing a house according to the form, so too the agent conceives the form of the act in his intellect before applying it to action by performing the act. Thus, states Thomas, when commenting on the way in which the end moves the agent: “In this way the intellect moves the will, because the good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end.”⁶⁹

Sherwin explains very lucidly how in art and action, as in natural generation, the final cause and the formal cause are intimately linked:

For example, the formal cause of natural generation is the substantial form of the generator. Since, however, the goal of the generation is the reproduction of the generator’s own form, the form is also the end of the generation. This means that the final cause of the generation preexists in the agent as the formal cause. Analogously the same thing occurs in human action. The form of the act is the end of the act. The goal the agent seeks to attain is to produce an action that is “conformed” to the form in his intellect. The form as it exists in the act is the final cause of the action, but as it preexists in the intellect it is the formal cause of the act.⁷⁰

This intimate relationship between formal and final causality provides further evidence for the participation of the will in the life of the intellect.

⁶⁸ *De malo* q. 6 a. 1: “[O]biectum intellectus est primum principium in genere causae formalis.”

⁶⁹ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “[H]oc modo intellectus movet voluntatem, quia bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis, et movet ipsam ut finis.”

⁷⁰ Sherwin. *By Knowledge and By Love*, p. 42.

It is important to note in relation to this point that God in fact moves both the intellect and the will just as he “moves all things in accordance with their conditions.”⁷¹ Divine providence thus brings about necessary effects from necessary causes but contingent effects from contingent causes. At *STh* I-II, q. 10 a. 4, Thomas applies this principle to the will. In this regard he first of all establishes that its causality is contingent: it is an active principle that is not determined to one effect but rather has an indifferent relation to many effects. God therefore moves it in such a way that “He does not determine it of necessity to one thing, but its movement remains contingent and not necessary, except in those things to which it is moved naturally.”⁷²

The assertion that the will is moved by God in no way vitiates the claim that the will, as a rational appetite, is specified by an act of the intellect. It is precisely as a rational appetite that it is moved by God since God moves all things “in accordance with their conditions.” It thus remains the case, as Thomas writes, that “the intellect moves the will, because the good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end.”⁷³ As Westberg asserts: “The essence of finality is the understanding of something done for a purpose or for a definite goal, which can be properly true only for rational agents, though analogically of all agents.”⁷⁴

In addition to the participation of the will in the intellect one can also speak of the reverse dynamic, namely the participation of the intellect in the will. We have already noted that the intellect moves the will in that its intelligible object is the good which is also the

⁷¹ *STh* I-II, q. 10 a. 4: “[O]mnia movet secundum eorum conditionem.”

⁷² *Ibid.*: “Deus ipsam movet, quod non ex necessitate ad unum determinat, sed remanet motus eius contingens et non necessarius, nisi in his ad quae naturaliter movetur.”

⁷³ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “[I]ntellectus movet voluntatem, quia bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis, et movet ipsam ut finis.” See also *STh* I-II, q. 91; *De ver* q. 22 a. 12; and *De malo* q. 6 a. 1.

⁷⁴ Westberg, “Did Aquinas Change His Mind about the Will?” p. 57.

object of the will. In this case we have an instance of the end moving the agent. There is nevertheless a sense in which the will moves the intellect and all the powers of the soul in the manner of an efficient cause: “Secondly, a thing is said to move as an agent, as what alters moves what is altered, and what impels moves what is impelled. In this way the will moves the intellect, and all the powers of the soul.”⁷⁵ The relationship obtaining in this instance between the will, on the one hand, and intellect and the other powers, on the other hand, is that of the power which regards the universal end to the powers which regard particular ends. In the context of this relationship “that power which regards the universal end moves the powers which regard the particular ends.”⁷⁶ In other words, while the object of the will is the good in general, each power is ordered to its own proper good. The proper good of sight, for example, is colour; that of the intellect is knowledge of the truth. The will therefore moves the intellect to know the truth and sight to seek out colour. There are of course many instances where we are confronted with truth without having sought it and where we see or hear things without having resolved to hear or to see them. The point in question here however is that the will can nevertheless move the other powers with the exception of the

⁷⁵ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “Alio modo dicitur aliquid movere per modum agentis; sicut alterans movet alteratum, et impellens movet impulsum. Et hoc modo voluntas movet intellectum, et omnes animae vires.” See also *De ver* q. 22 a. 12: “Sed movere per modum *causae agentis* est voluntatis, et non intellectus”; *De malo* q. 6 a. 1: “Si ergo consideremus motum potentiarum animae ex parte obiecti specificantis actum, primum principium motionis est ex intellectu: hoc enim modo bonum intellectum movet etiam ipsam voluntatem. Si autem consideremus motus potentiarum animae ex parte exercitii actus, sic principium motionis est ex voluntate”; and *De malo* q. 6 a. 10: “[D]e intellectu et voluntate quodammodo est simile, et quodammodo dissimile. Dissimile quidem quantum ad exercitium actus, nam intellectus movetur a voluntate ad agendum, voluntas autem non ab alia potentia, sed a seipsa.”

⁷⁶ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “[I]lla potentia quae respicit finem universalem, movet potentias quae respiciunt fines particulares.”

vegetative ones to their respective ends.⁷⁷ The powers that the will can move include the intellect and the will therefore enjoys priority over the intellect in this respect.

In one sense, therefore, the intellect moves the will and, in another sense, the will moves the intellect. This dynamic of reciprocal causation entails an important psychological consequence, namely that the power of intellect and will “include one another in their acts, because the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.”⁷⁸ Thomas, in reaching this conclusion, remarks that intellect and will can each be considered in two ways: the intellect “as apprehensive of universal being and truth, and as a thing and a particular power having a determinate act,” the will “according to the common nature of its object – that is to say, as appetitive of universal good – and as a determinate power of the soul having a determinate act.”⁷⁹ Compared with each other according to the universality of their respective objects, the intellect reveals itself to be higher and nobler than the will: the object of the intellect is the idea of the appetible good while “the appetible good, the idea of which is in the intellect, is the object of the will.”⁸⁰ If however we consider the

⁷⁷ Ibid.: “Obiectum autem voluntatis est bonum et finis in communi. Quaelibet autem potentia comparatur ad aliquod bonum proprium sibi conveniens; sicut visus ad perceptionem coloris, intellectus ad cognitionem veri. Et ideo voluntas per modum agentis movet omnes animae potentias ad suos actus, praeter vires naturales vegetativae partis, quae nostro arbitrio non subduntur.”

⁷⁸ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1: “[H]ae potentiae suis actibus invicem se includunt, quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere.”

⁷⁹ Ibid.: “[I]ntelectus dupliciter considerari potest, uno modo, secundum quod intellectus est apprehensivus entis et veri universalis; alio modo, secundum quod est quaedam res, et particularis potentia habens determinatum actum. Et similiter voluntas dupliciter considerari potest, uno modo, secundum communitatem sui obiecti, prout scilicet est appetitiva boni communis; alio modo, secundum quod est quaedam determinata animae potentia habens determinatum actum.”

⁸⁰ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 3 : “[B]onum autem appetibile, cuius ratio est in intellectu, est obiectum voluntatis.”

intellect with regard to the common nature of its object and the will as a determinate power, the relative superiority of the intellect again results because “under the notion of being and truth is contained both the will itself, and its act, and its object.”⁸¹ Thus, explains Thomas, “the intellect understands the will and its act, and its object, just as it understands other species of things, as stone or wood, which are contained in the common notion of being and truth.”⁸² The relative superiority of the will to the intellect arises when we consider the will with regard to the common nature of its object, namely the good, and the intellect as particular power. In this case “the intellect, and its act, and its object, which is truth, each of which is some species of good, are contained under the common notion of good.”⁸³

The causal interplay between intellect and will just delineated supports Horvath’s contention that, if we are to express ourselves precisely, we must say that the intellect is ordered to the *bonum verum*, while the will is ordered to the *verum bonum*.⁸⁴ Indeed, Thomas himself, after stating that the “intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand” adds: “In the same way good is contained in truth, inasmuch as it is an understood truth, and truth in good, inasmuch as it is a desired good.”⁸⁵ Thus, while the objects of the will and of the intellect differ logically, each is contained in the

⁸¹ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1: “[S]ub ratione entis et veri, quam apprehendit intellectus, continetur voluntas ipsa, et actus eius, et obiectum ipsius.”

⁸² *Ibid.*: “[I]ntellectus intelligit voluntatem, et actum eius, et obiectum ipsius, sicut et alia specialia intellecta, ut lapidem aut lignum, quae continentur sub communi ratione entis et veri.”

⁸³ *Ibid.*: “[I]ntellectus ipse, et ipsum intelligere, et obiectum eius, quod est verum, quorum quodlibet est quoddam speciale bonum.”

⁸⁴ Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, p. 63.

⁸⁵ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1: “[B]onum continetur sub vero, inquantum est quoddam verum intellectum; et verum continetur sub bono, inquantum est quoddam bonum desideratum.”

other, “for the true is good and the good is true.”⁸⁶ Consequently, the intellect comprehends the objects of the will while the will can seek the objects of the intellect.

Let us summarize the content of this chapter thus far. We have seen Thomas maintain that the will is in the intellect “as the thing caused is in its principle.”⁸⁷ This assertion implies the efficient causality of the intellect in bringing forth the will. The intellect also acts with the force of a final cause vis-à-vis the will: the good understood by the intellect serves as the object of the will and moves it to its end. The will is intrinsically inclined to the object of desire presented to it by the intellect since it participates in the nature of the intellect. Formal causality is intimately related to the force of final causality that the intellect exerts upon the will. The intellect grasps the good as a comprehensible form, which form then provides the will with its motive force: “[T]he good understood is the object of the will, and moves it as an end.”⁸⁸ The end sought by an agent preexists in his intellect as a formal cause. A correct understanding of the notion that the will is moved by God requires that we take due cognizance of the fact that the will’s act is specified by the intellect. The inherent connection between intelligence and finality does not allow the separation of final causality from the intellect in order to emphasize the role of the will. In addition to the participation of the will in the intellect we can also speak of the participation of the intellect in the will on the grounds that the will moves the intellect to the knowledge of truth. It moves the intellect to its proper end and it does so in the manner of an efficient cause. A reciprocal causation therefore obtains between intellect and will. This causal reciprocity allows us to talk of a mutual

⁸⁶ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 2: “[V]erum est quoddam bonum, et bonum est quoddam verum.”

⁸⁷ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 3: “[S]icut principiatum in principio.”

⁸⁸ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4: “[B]onum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis, et movet ipsam ut finis.”

containment of the intellect and will. As Horvath contends, the intellect is ordered to the *bonum verum*, while the will is ordered to the *verum bonum*.⁸⁹

This mutual containment of the intellect and will could be stated in terms of circularity (*circulatio*). Although this term is not encountered in the *Summa*, it is nevertheless an apt metaphor for the relationship of dynamic reciprocity that obtains between the intellect and will: on the one hand, the intellect both moves and is moved by the will; on the other hand, the will both moves and is moved by the intellect. The dynamics of circularity between intellect, which are elaborated in the next section, lead to the conclusion that not only are right understanding and reasoning essential for true love but that true love is also essential for right understanding and reasoning. Human knowing possesses an affective dimension. The considerations of the following section aim to further our appreciation of Thomas's conception of the intimate interplay between intellect and will and, in so doing, to prepare the way for an exposition of the epistemic implications of this interplay. This interinvolvement of intellect and will furnishes the anthropological foundations of what one might in contemporary terms describe as Thomas's theological hermeneutics, which theological hermeneutics will be broached in later chapters.

5. The epistemic-affective implications of *circulatio* in the acts of intellect and will

In seeking to grasp the implications of the interinvolvement of intellect and will that we have delineated the following observation by Ignazio Camporeale, O.P., is helpful – namely that for Thomas the first principle of operation of the human soul is one even though we can discern by means of abstraction distinct moments in its activity.⁹⁰ These diverse

⁸⁹ Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, p. 63.

⁹⁰ This paragraph draws upon Ignazio Camporeale, O.P., “La conoscenza affettiva nel pensiero di S. Tommaso,” *Sapienza* 12 (1959), pp. 237-271.

aspects of its dynamism must therefore form a perfect synthesis in concrete reality. The subject, in so far as he exists, is one. Consequently, he is also one in the concrete reality of his operation. In other words, the spiritual activity of man is a synthesis of knowledge and love. The individual human subject does not first know and then love: we employ these abstract distinctions of before and after in order the better to analyze human activity. Human activity is in fact complete in itself at every instant. In concrete reality all its different operations are involved in a perfect synthesis which conceptual analysis finds difficult to grasp. In actual reality all love involves knowledge and all knowledge involves love – although this assertion ought not to be taken to mean that knowledge and love are in some way identical. Rather, the powers of intellect and will “include one another in their acts” in the sense that “the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.”⁹¹ As Thomas remarks elsewhere, the intellect and will can be said to circle around each other (*se invicem circumeunt*).⁹² Their activities might be said to overflow into each other.

Thus, the interplay between intellect and will exerts a fundamental influence on the unfolding of both knowledge and love. This intimate interplay is at times difficult to analyze. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira writes, “The life of the spirit in fact unfolds as an intimate history – at times difficult to analyze – of this interplay of influences, that is to say, this interplay of cognitive and affective interests.”⁹³ Their interaction results in a unified sense of

⁹¹ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1: “[H]ae potentiae suis actibus invicem se includunt, quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere.”

⁹² *De Virt* q. 1 a. 7.

⁹³ Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira, O.P., “*Ordo rationis, ordo amoris*: la notion d’ordre au centre de l’univers éthique de S. Thomas,” in *Ordo sapientiae et amoris: image et message de saint Thomas D’Aquin à travers les récentes études historiques, herméneutiques et doctrinales. Hommage au professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P.*,

direction as intellect circles and overflows into will and will circles and overflows into intellect. On the one hand, true understanding and reasoning cultivate right willing and vice versa; the dynamic interchange between them culminates in the attainment of the *bonum verum* and the *verum bonum*. On the other hand, flawed understanding distorts the operation of the will while the distorted operation of the will undermines the ability of the intellect to discern truth. In this case the ensuing dynamic is one of downward spiraling which leads the knowing and willing subject to embrace what constitutes a deformation of the *bonum verum* and *verum bonum*.

The relationship between the movements of intellect and will is dialectical. It is certainly not the case that the intellect must attain to complete understanding before the movement of the will begins. Rather, because the intellect and will in their operations circle each other and overflow into each other, each point of the intellect's movement serves as a point of departure for the movement of the will, that is to say, a point of departure towards the thing whose form has been apprehended by the intellect. By the same token, each moment of the will's attainment of the object of its desire is a stimulus to further intellectual engagement. Nevertheless, this mutual engagement does not continue *ad infinitum*. Indeed, since love is the term of knowledge, "love can begin at once where knowledge ends, namely in the thing itself which is known through another thing."⁹⁴

In brief, Thomas maintains that a relationship of dynamic reciprocity obtains between intellect – both speculative and practical – and will. This relationship can be depicted in terms of circular movement. In other words, the intellect both moves and is moved by the will while

à l'occasion de son 65^e anniversaire," ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveira, O.P. (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1993), p. 297.

⁹⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 27 a. 4 ad 1: "[U]bi desinit cognitio, scilicet in ipsa re quae per aliam cognoscitur, ibi statim dilectio incipere potest."

the will both moves and is moved by the intellect. This interinvolvement of intellect and will means that the intellect not only understands itself, it also understands the will. Similarly, the will not only wills itself to will, it also wills the intellect to understand. Hence love is essential for perfect knowledge of an object. This point is reinforced when we consider the unitary constitution of the human person: this unitary constitution ensures the concrete reality of her operation. All knowledge entails love and all love entails knowledge. This interplay between knowledge and love means that right understanding and reasoning cultivate right willing and vice versa, while the deficient operation of either faculty undermines the activity of the other.

6. Conclusion

The will is intellectual by nature; it is intrinsically characterized by intellectuality on account of its participation in the life of the intellect. Intellect and will are moreover rooted in the same substance of the soul with the intellect being the principle of the will. Consequently, “what is in the will is, in a certain way, also in the intellect.”⁹⁵ Intellect can also be said to participate in the will because there are ways in which the will can be construed as being higher than the intellect. There obtains moreover a dynamic of reciprocal causation between intellect and will: the intellect moves the will and, in another sense, the will moves the intellect. This dynamic of reciprocal causation entails an important psychological consequence, namely that the power of intellect and will “include one another in their acts, because the intellect understands that the will wills, and the will wills the intellect to understand.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ *STh* I, q. 87 a. 4 ad 1: “[C]onsequens est ut quod est in voluntate, sit etiam quodammodo in intellectu.”

⁹⁶ *STh* I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1: “[H]ae potentiae suis actibus invicem se includunt, quia intellectus intelligit voluntatem velle, et voluntas vult intellectum intelligere.”

These characteristics alone of Thomas's highly complex and nuanced account of the intellect and will mean that to construe the intellect as exercising external control over the will or the will as exercising external control over the intellect is to construe the relationship between these faculties in terms that are decidedly not Thomas's. Thomas's view of the relationship between intellect and will can be further elucidated by the notion of *circulatio* according to which intellect and will circle around each other and overflow into each other. When the image of circularity is applied to the soul's relation with external reality we are led to conclude that a reciprocity of influence obtains between knowledge and love. While they are each distinct from one another, at the same time they end and develop in one another. The spiritual activity of human beings is in effect a synthesis of knowledge and love, notwithstanding the fact that intellect and will are distinct powers of the soul. There can be no such thing as pure reason in the sense of reason devoid of any influence from the will just as there can be no such thing as a pure will.

Thomas's account of the life of the human mind is fashioned in the light of his Trinitarian theology. The analogous instantiation of intellect and will in a finite mode in man means that means that the insights that theology affords us into the inner life of the Trinity (*theologia*) provide a source of knowledge for our understanding of the workings of the human mind. Healy is worth quoting on this point:

[A]lthough there is indeed some kind of analogy between divine cause and created effects, the analogy flows, so to speak, only one way, from God to creatures, but not at all the other way. One cannot establish any knowledge of God – even theological – by means of the *analogia entis* alone. On the contrary ... the analogy of being makes it possible to claim that only in knowing something of God can we really know *creatures* as they truly are, as created and thus as more than merely 'natural'. Clearly

that is a theological claim, one not grounded upon natural reason alone. According to Thomas, Scripture tells us that created effects are like their cause, but also that their cause is not at all like them: ‘Although it may be admitted that creatures are in some sort like God, it must nowise be admitted that God is like creatures’ (ST 1.4.3 ad 4).⁹⁷

Man is made to the image of the Trinity precisely on account of his capacity to know and to love God, which knowing and loving is predicated upon the possession of intellect and will. In God there is a clear order in the processions: the Son (Word) proceeds from the Father while the Holy Spirit (Love) proceeds from both the Father and the Son. The emergence of the will from the intellect and of both from the essence of the soul in human beings mirrors the order of the divine processions. While they are distinct faculties, the fact both that each participates in the life of the other and that it is the human substance that underlies them that knows and loves, represents analogously the communion of persons in the Trinity. It ought to be noted, however, that while Thomas’s construal of the life of mind is motivated by his Trinitarian theology, it nevertheless exhibits a philosophical coherence in its own right. Here we witness one instance of the harmony that properly obtains between faith and reason.

The relationship of interinvolvement of intellect and will as portrayed in this chapter, predicated as it is on the likeness of analogy with the Trinity, rules out *tout court* the possibility of any such thing as pure reason or pure will in the sense of the activity of these faculties having no bearing on each other. As we have seen, to understand is said essentially of God – that is to say, it is an act of the divine essence which is common to the three Persons – as well as being said personally of the Son. Likewise, while Love is a personal name of the Holy Spirit, love is nonetheless also ascribed to the divine essence and therefore

⁹⁷ Nicholas M. Healy, *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian of the Christian Life* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 61-62.

to the three divine Persons. In the Trinity, the Word and Love suffuse each other. On this basis, it is reasonable to argue that any conception of human reason that divorces it from the influence of the will undermines the doctrine of human beings as made to the image of the Trinity. Such a conception also vitiates the likeness of conformation aspect of the image on account of its relationship of intimate interdependence with the likeness of analogy aspect. In a sense the analogy with human knowing and loving which Thomas employs in order to secure orthodox Catholic teaching against heresy demands that we view the spiritual activity of human beings as a synthesis of knowledge and love dynamically unfolding towards its final fulfillment in the beatific vision. The human soul, endowed with intellect and will, bears analogically the impress of the Trinity as an effect bears the impress of its cause. Of course, as always, we must bear in mind the difference that analogy imports. In human beings, intellect and will are distinct from the essence of the soul. In God, they are identical with the divine essence. Hence, God's knowing is His willing while human knowing and willing remain distinct activities, albeit activities that bear upon each other so that neither is independent of the other.

In this chapter we have elucidated Thomas's understanding of the relationship between the human intellect and will and have drawn out some implications of this relationship for knowing and willing. Having accomplished this task we are now in a position to reflect on the significance of the missions of the Son and the Holy Spirit for the human subject in his "interpenetrating powers of intelligence and will."⁹⁸ At this point, therefore, our deliberations reconnect with those of chapters one and two. In Christ incarnate we have a concrete exemplar Whom we can imitate. This imitation shapes our knowing and willing according to His example. Bearing in mind the interpenetration of intellect and will in man, it

⁹⁸ Aidan Nichols, O.P., *Discovering Aquinas: An Introduction to His Life, Work, and Influence* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002), p. 71.

will be argued that the degree to which our capacities for knowing and willing are transformed in this life depends directly upon the extent to which they are conformed in the Holy Spirit to the example of Christ incarnate. This conformation also involves the created image being progressively drawn into the inner Trinitarian life of knowing and loving. As such, it also constitutes the growth of man to the image of the Trinity. The next chapter therefore focuses on the Incarnation, the visible mission of the second Person of the Holy Trinity, as well as on His invisible mission, as the indispensable conditions for the exalted status of Christian knowing and loving. Subsequent chapters will then concentrate on the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCARNATION FOR HUMAN KNOWING AND LOVING

As a result of having been created to the image and likeness of the triune God human beings experience an irresistible attraction, as Torrell points out, “to become like God in the way that an image resembles the model on which it is made.”¹ The potency of this irresistible attraction is realized through a progressive assimilation to the Word through the Holy Spirit. Once again, however, the ineluctable tendency of human beings towards union with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the beatific vision is possible only because of the creative and salvific work of the Trinity of Persons in the economy of salvation. Chapter two considered the invisible missions of the Son and Holy Spirit in this regard and later chapters dealing with the theological virtues of faith and charity will return to these missions. In this chapter however we turn our attention to the visible mission of the Son in the Incarnation and to the invisible mission of the Son by grace in order to examine their significance for assimilation to the divine life, that is to say, their implications for human knowing and loving.

In this regard we seek to advance our argument in the light of Thomas’s doctrine of man as created to the image of the Trinity, in the light of his account of the grammar of the intra-Trinitarian life and its implications for creation and salvation, and in the light of the dynamics of interinvolvement of intellect and will. The dynamics of interinvolvement of these faculties means that the life of reason can never be detached from the basic affective concerns of the epistemic agent. Epistemic objectivity cannot therefore be a function of

¹ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, p. 82.

‘pure’ reason in the sense of reason that is not swayed for good or for bad by rational desire. The question therefore arises as to whether we can adduce any criteria that can secure the moorings of epistemic objectivity. This chapter proposes an affirmative answer to this question. It argues that for Thomas the basic criterion for epistemic objectivity is the conformation of one’s knowing and willing to the teaching and example of Christ. Expressed otherwise, the Incarnation of Christ possesses hermeneutical significance. Bearing in mind the dynamics of reciprocal influence that obtain between intellect and will, this significance can be stated briefly as follows: the most exalted exercise of intellect and will in their dynamic reciprocity with regard to reality *sub ratione Dei*, that is to say an exercise of intellect that puts us in contact with what is really true and an exercise of will that leads us to desire what is truly good, is possible only by participating by grace in the life of Christ. This participation is effected by appropriation of His teaching and imitation of His example.

In order to advance this claim, this chapter will in the first instance ponder Thomas’s insistence that Christ is the moral exemplar *par excellence*. Christ’s assumption of a truly human nature endowed with singular moral perfections forms the basis of the notion that He is the supreme exemplar to imitate, a notion encapsulated by Thomas’s expression “Christ’s action is our instruction.”² In His eternally conceived Word God knows both Himself and all things. The Word, the eternal concept of God’s wisdom, thus constitutes the exemplar likeness of all created things and in particular of human nature. The fact that the Person of the Son was personally united to human nature means that His moral example, since it is ontologically grounded in His eternal procession, constitutes the supreme manifestation of the ordering force of divine Wisdom in human affairs. As Michael Dauphinais expresses the

² *STh* III, q. 40 a. 1 ad 3: “Christi actio fuit nostra instructio.”

point, “St. Thomas depicts the Incarnation and its effects for the moral life.”³ He continues: “The converse then follows: the moral life, according to St. Thomas, cannot be separated from the mystery of Christ.”⁴ To imitate the example of Christ therefore means that the disciple is assimilated to God’s very own Wisdom, albeit analogically in a mode proportioned to human nature. God’s Wisdom as revealed to us in Christ possesses, however, a cruciform character and consequently appears as foolishness to worldly wisdom.

Imitatio Christi is not the imitation of an external model. Rather, the mysteries of Christ’s life that the believer imitates exercise their transforming power from within the believer. It ought to be emphasized that for Thomas it is the case that *all* the mysteries of Christ’s life that the believer imitates exercise their transforming power from within the believer. In our exposition, however, we will focus on Christ’s resurrection in order to elucidate this point. Thomas, in his treatment of Christ’s resurrection has recourse to the notions of efficient causality and exemplar causality in order to explain how the resurrection unfolds its grace-filled power from within the believer. While the divine efficient causality makes the divine power present to all human beings at all times and in all places, the divine exemplar causality works its power only in the just who are conformed to Christ in His Sonship. In the case of the just however these two forms of causality are intimately connected as two aspects of one and the same grace. The divine power present to all by means of the divine efficient causality imparts to the believer the capacity to be conformed to Christ’s exemplarity, which capacity is possible only by the divine power. To talk of the presence of the divine power in the life of the believer is to talk of grace. Since grace is mediated to us through the humanity of Christ as the instrument of His divinity, it has a Christological

³ Michael Dauphinais, “The Pedagogy of the Incarnation: Christ the Teacher according to St. Thomas Aquinas,” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2000), p. 248.

⁴ Ibid.

character. Indeed, this chapter can in brief be said to be concerned with the Christological character of grace.

1. Participating in eternal Wisdom by imitating the example of the incarnate Word

In striving for moral excellence and spiritual perfection, human beings seek a concrete model to imitate, and obviously the most exalted model imaginable is that of God Himself becoming man.⁵ Christ fulfils this fundamental human need for exemplarity in two ways. Firstly, his sinless actions allow us to imitate his outward comportment. Thus, Christ furnishes us with the moral exemplar *par excellence*. This point is highlighted by the fact that, according to Thomas F. Ryan's calculation, the word 'exemplum' occurs thirty-eight times in *STh* III, qq. 27 – 59, in connection with "a wide range of qualities and actions for which Christ provides the model."⁶ Augustine exercises a fundamental influence on Thomas's account of Christ's example. Already at *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2, Thomas employs the term 'exemplum' when discussing the necessity of the Incarnation for the salvation of the human race. There he prefaces a quotation from Augustine with the assertion that Christ set us an example of right action (*rectam operationem*). Further on in his treatise on Christology, Thomas enlarges his conception of Christ's example, again by drawing upon Augustine: "[I]n the man Christ the Son of God gave Himself to us as a pattern of living."⁷ He employs the same quotation at *STh* II-II, q. 42 a. 2 *obj.* 1. Further on we encounter a similar

⁵ See *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2: "Augustinus dicit, in quodam sermone de nativitate domini, *homo sequendus non erat, qui videri poterat, Deus sequendus erat, qui videri non poterat. Ut ergo exhiberetur homini et qui ab homine videretur, et quem homo sequeretur, Deus factus est homo.*"

⁶ Thomas F. Ryan, *Thomas Aquinas as Reader of the Psalms* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 97.

⁷ *STh* III, q. 15 a. 1 *obj.* 5: "[I]n homine Christo se nobis ad exemplum praebuilt filius Dei."

formulation: “God’s Wisdom became man to give us an example in righteousness of living.”⁸

Taking his lead from Augustine, Thomas aims in these texts to underline the fact that Christ constitutes the perfect model for human living.

It would exceed the scope of this present work to offer an exhaustive account of particular examples of moral exemplarism noted by Thomas. The *Tertia Pars* is particularly marked by appeal to Christ’s virtues as examples to be imitated by His followers. Thus, for example, as we have already seen, “It was fitting for the body assumed by the Son of God to be subject to human infirmities and defects ... in order to show us an example of patience by valiantly bearing up against human passibility and defects.”⁹ Nevertheless, while Christ did assume our defects, He did not assume the defect of sin since, among other reasons, “by sinning He could afford no example of virtue, since sin is opposed to virtue.”¹⁰ He wished to be tempted “in order to give us an example: to teach us, to wit, how to overcome the temptations of the devil.”¹¹ Before being tempted, Christ wished to fast – again “in order to give us an example.” By so doing “He teaches us the need of fasting in order to equip ourselves against temptation.”¹² Thomas writes that Christ in His Passion set before us an example of obedience, humility, constancy, justice, and other virtues which are necessary for salvation.¹³ Other virtues that Christ sets before us as an example include faith,¹⁴ bearing

⁸ *STh* III, q. 46 a. 4: “[S]apientia Dei hominem, ad exemplum quo recte viveremus, suscepit.”

⁹ *STh* III, q. 14 a. 1: “[C]onveniens fuisse corpus assumptum a filio Dei humanis infirmitatibus et defectibus subiacere ... propter exemplum patientiae, quod nobis exhibet passiones et defectus humanos fortiter tolerando.”

¹⁰ *STh* III, q. 15 a. 1: “[P]eccando exempla virtutum praeberere non potuit, cum peccatum contrarietur virtuti.”

¹¹ *STh* III, q. 41 a. 1: “[P]ropter exemplum, ut scilicet nos instrueret qualiter Diaboli tentationes vincamus.”

¹² *STh* III, q. 41 a. 3: “[P]ropter exemplum ... docuit quod per ieiunium nos oportet contra tentationes armari.”

¹³ *STh* III, q. 46 a. 3.

¹⁴ *STh* III, q. 41 a. 2 ad 1: “Christus proponitur omnibus in exemplum per fidem, secundum illud Heb. XII, *aspicientes in auctorem fidei et consummatorem, Iesum*. Fides autem, ut dicitur Rom. X, est ex auditu, non

insults honourably,¹⁵ patience,¹⁶ and humility.¹⁷ Further instances of Christ's exemplarity need not be given in order to secure the point. In brief, "In His manner of living our Lord gave an example of perfection as to all those things which of themselves relate to salvation."¹⁸

Throughout his treatment of Christ's moral exemplarity, Thomas regularly employs a mode of theological argumentation that is based on the notion of 'fittingness' (*convenientia*). While by no means absent elsewhere in Thomas's writings this notion occurs with particular frequency in his Christological texts, including those dealing with Christ's moral exemplarity. Fittingness arguments offer intellectual support to what is necessarily the case because it is recorded in Scripture. They are not meant to function as logical proofs. An

autem ex visu, quinimmo dicitur, Ioan. XX, *beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt*. Et ideo, ad hoc quod tentatio Christi esset nobis in exemplum, non oportet quod ab hominibus videretur, sed sufficiens fuit quod hominibus narraretur."

¹⁵ *STh* III, q. 41 a. 4 ad 6: "Christus, cum passus fuisset tentationis iniuriam, dicente sibi Diabolo, *si filius Dei es, mitte te deorsum*, non est turbatus, nec Diabolum increpavit. Quando vero Diabolus Dei usurpavit sibi honorem, dicens, *haec omnia tibi dabo si cadens adoraveris me*, exasperatus est et repulit eum, dicens, vade, Satanas, ut nos illius discamus exemplo nostras quidem iniurias magnanimiter sustinere, Dei autem iniurias nec usque ad auditum sufferre."

¹⁶ *STh* III, q. 14 a. 1: "[C]onveniens fuisse corpus assumptum a filio Dei humanis infirmitatibus et defectibus subiacere ... propter exemplum patientiae, quod nobis exhibet passiones et defectus humanos fortiter tolerando."

¹⁷ *STh* III, q. 37 a. 4: "[S]icut plenitudo gratiae a Christo derivatur in matrem, ita decuit ut mater humilitati filii conformaretur, humilibus enim Deus dat gratiam, ut dicitur Iac. IV. Et ideo, sicut Christus, licet legi non esset obnoxius, voluit tamen circumcisionem et alia legis onera subire, ad demonstrandum humilitatis et obedientiae exemplum."

¹⁸ *STh* III, q. 40 a. 2 ad 1: "[D]ominus in sua conversatione exemplum perfectionis dedit in omnibus quae per se pertinent ad salutem."

appreciation of the way in which fittingness arguments function can be garnered from the following consideration of the ontological foundation of Christ's absolute moral exemplarity.

Christ's absolute moral exemplarity is ontologically grounded in the procession of the eternal Word through Whom all things were made. This theological point is evident at *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8, where Thomas discusses whether it was more fitting that the Person of the Son rather than the Father or the Holy Spirit should assume human nature. This article is not only deeply informed by Thomas's reading of Scripture and the patristic tradition but is also intimately connected with various other important discussions in the *Summa*. The response of the article is formulated by way of appeal to the notion of 'fittingness': "It was most fitting (*convenientissimum*) that the person of the Son should become incarnate."¹⁹ The reader is thus alerted to the fact that Thomas is not about to prove *a priori* what makes the assumption of human nature by the Person of the Son necessary. Rather, as Healy puts it, "the necessity to be explored is that which is necessarily the case because it is described in Scripture."²⁰ It is no more possible to demonstrate its logical necessity than it is to show the logical necessity of self-evident principles in an Aristotelian higher science. Instead, as Healy remarks, the theologian should attempt to explain why these means to salvation are the best by displaying the appropriateness of God's actions."²¹ The three arguments of *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8, serve this function.

The first argument appeals to the union of the divine and human natures in the Person of the Son. Thomas first of all states the general reason in support of this union, namely that "such as are similar are fittingly united."²² He then proceeds to explicate the basis of this

¹⁹ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "[C]onvenientissimum fuit personam filii incarnari."

²⁰ Healy, *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

²² *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "Convenienter enim ea quae sunt similia, uniuntur."

similarity by way of analogy with the word or concept of the craftsman, which word or concept constitutes an exemplar likeness of whatever he makes: the Word of God, Who is God's eternal concept, "is the exemplar likeness of all creatures."²³ This argument presupposes Thomas's discussion of the Son as Word at *STh* I, q. 34: "[B]ecause God by one act understands Himself and all things, His one only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures."²⁴ The ontological grounding of all created reality resides in the eternal procession of the eternal Word from the Father.

With regard to the agreement of created reality with the Word, Thomas first discusses creatures in general and then human nature in particular. All creatures are established in their proper species by their proper ideas that reside eternally in the divine mind. They can therefore be said to participate in the likeness of the Word, albeit in a manner that is subject to change unlike their eternal exemplars uttered in the Word. On account of the Fall the creature's proper ordering to its "eternal and unchangeable perfection" has been lost and so it was fitting that it should be restored to this perfection "by the non-participated and personal union of the Word with a creature."²⁵ Thomas appeals to the analogy of the craftsman who is able to restore his handiwork when it has fallen into ruin on the basis of the intellectual conception that he has of it – what Thomas describes as "the intellectual form of his art."²⁶

²³ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "[V]erbum Dei, quod est aeternus conceptus eius, est similitudo exemplaris totius creaturae." See also *In Joh* I, lectio II [77]: "Quicumque enim aliquid facit, oportet quod illud praeconciat in sua sapientia, quae est forma et ratio rei factae: sicut forma in mente artificis praeconcepta est ratio arcae faciendae."

²⁴ *STh* I, q. 34 a. 3: "[Q]uia Deus uno actu et se et omnia intelligit, unicum verbum eius est expressivum non solum patris, sed etiam creaturarum."

²⁵ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "[P]er unionem verbi ad creaturam non participativam sed personalem, conveniens fuit reparari creaturam in ordine ad aeternam et immobilem perfectionem."

²⁶ *Ibid.*: "[P]er formam artis conceptam."

In the context of this general agreement between the Word and creatures, human beings occupy a special place on account of their rational nature since “the Word is a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from Whom all man’s wisdom is derived.”²⁷ According to this participatory understanding, human reason is perfected in wisdom “by participating in the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master.”²⁸ What Thomas says here is linked with his teaching concerning man as made to the image of God since divine Wisdom engages both the intellect and will, the faculties whereby we are capable of knowing and loving God. As Merriel remarks, the image of God is the “ineradicable capacity for God in man”²⁹ and as such it is also the innate capacity for sharing in God’s Wisdom. Thus, as we have seen, in his discussion of the divine missions Thomas writes that “the Son is the Word, not any sort of word, but one Who breathes forth Love ... Thus the Son is sent not in accordance with every and any kind of intellectual perfection, but according to the intellectual illumination, which breaks forth into the affection of love.”³⁰ A quotation from Ecclesiasticus both undergirds and sums up Thomas’s reflections on this point: “Hence it is said (Ecclus. 1:5): *The Word of God on high is the fountain of wisdom.*”³¹

²⁷ Ibid.: “[H]abet convenientiam specialiter cum humana natura, ex eo quod verbum est conceptus aeternae sapientiae a qua omnis sapientia hominum derivatur. Et ideo homo per hoc in sapientia proficit, quae est propria eius perfectio prout est rationalis, quod participat verbum Dei, sicut discipulus instruitur per hoc quod recipit verbum magistri. Unde et Eccli. I dicitur, *fons sapientiae verbum Dei in excelsis.*”

²⁸ Ibid.: “[H]omo per hoc in sapientia proficit, quae est propria eius perfectio prout est rationalis, quod participat verbum Dei, sicut discipulus instruitur per hoc quod recipit verbum magistri.”

²⁹ Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity*, p. 4.

³⁰ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3: “Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem ... Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur filius, sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris.”

³¹ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: “Unde et Eccli. I dicitur, *fons sapientiae verbum Dei in excelsis.*”

The foregoing argumentation leads to the striking conclusion that the fittingness of the personal union of the Word of God to human nature was “for the consummate perfection of man.”³² In our treatment of charity in chapter nine we will see that the Gift of wisdom, whereby human beings participate in divine Wisdom, bestows upon the Christian what Thomas describes as a “sympathy or connaturality for Divine things.”³³ This connaturality with divine things enables human reason to judge aright with regard to divine things and, in the light of divine things, to judge correctly with respect to human affairs.

While the doctrine of the *imago Dei* is implicit in the first argument offered by Thomas for the fittingness of the assumption of human nature by the Person of the Son, it is stated explicitly in second argument that he formulates. Soteriological considerations are obviously to the forefront here, considerations that receive their impetus from Scripture. The guiding force of Scripture is evident from the placing of quotations from St. Paul’s letter to the Romans at the middle and end of this argument. Quoting Rom 8:17, “*If sons, heirs also,*” Thomas moulds his reflections concerning predestination according to the mind of St Paul: the heavenly inheritance, that is to say, ultimate Beatitude, is bestowed only on sons. The assumption of human nature by the Person of the Son serves as the means whereby the Father adopts us as his sons and preordains us to the heavenly inheritance.³⁴ Thomas has already made this point in his discussion of the Person of the Father at *STh* I, q. 33 a. 3. While God is the Father of rational creatures “by reason of the likeness of His image,”³⁵ He is the Father of

³² Ibid.: “[A]d consummatam hominis perfectionem.”

³³ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: “[C]ompassio sive connaturalitas ad res divinas.”

³⁴ See also *Ad Rom* VIII, lectio III [646]: “[S]i autem aliqui filii, per spiritum scilicet, sequitur etiam quod sint haeredes, quia non solum filio naturali, sed etiam adoptivo debetur haereditas. I Petr. I, v. 3 s.: *regeneravit nos in spem vivam in haereditatem*, et cetera. Ps. XV, 6: *haereditas mea praeclara est mihi*.”

³⁵ *STh* I, q. 33 a. 3: “[S]ecundum similitudinem imaginis.”

His adoptive sons “by similitude of grace” who, by the very grace that they have received “are ordained to the heritage of eternal glory ... according to Rom. viii. 16, 17: *The Spirit Himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God; and if sons, heirs also.*”³⁶ Here we witness the intimate connection between Trinitarian theology and Christology as also between *theologia* and *oikonomia*.

Being preordained moreover to this heavenly inheritance, that is to say, to eternal Beatitude, entails sharing the likeness of the sonship of the Son. In other words, predestination effects the conformation of the Christian to “*the image of His Son.*”³⁷ Thomas remarks in a similar vein in his commentary on the letter to the Romans: “The one who is adopted as a son of God is truly conformed to His Son.”³⁸ Once again Thomas connects his Christology with his Trinitarian theology. In brief, since human beings have been created through the Word Who is also the Image of the Father, they progress towards their perfection by imitating the example and words of the Incarnate Word. The Christian who models himself according to the example and teaching of Christ is not only perfected as a likeness of the incarnate Son but, on account of the Son’s assumption of human nature, is also assimilated to the eternal Word – assimilated, that is to say, analogically in a mode proportioned to human nature.

As we saw in chapter one, all human beings are made to the image of the Trinity on account of possessing the aptitude to know and to love God. This likeness of analogy has its

³⁶ Ibid.: “Aliquorum vero est pater secundum similitudinem gratiae, qui etiam dicuntur filii adoptivi, secundum quod ordinantur ad haereditatem aeternae gloriae per munus gratiae acceptum; secundum illud Rom. VIII, *ipse spiritus reddit testimonium spiritui nostro, quod sumus filii Dei; si autem filii, et haeredes.*”

³⁷ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: “[*Q*]uos praescivit et praedestinavit conformes fieri imagini filii eius.” Quotation from Rom 8 :29.

³⁸ *Ad Rom* VIII, lectio VI [704]: “Ille enim qui adoptatur in filium Dei, conformatur vero filio eius.”

ontological ground in the Word of God, that is to say, God's eternal concept, Who "is the exemplar likeness of all creatures"³⁹ and of human beings in particular. Likeness by grace is actualized by faith in Christ as the Son of God. By receiving instruction from Christ incarnate, that is to say, from the Person of the Son Who has assumed human nature, and by imitating His example the aptitude to know and to love God is further actualized.

This actualization however is progressive, that is to say, it admits of degrees: man advances in wisdom, which is his proper perfection inasmuch as he is rational, by participating in the Word of God just as "the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master."⁴⁰ The Incarnation is in the divine salvific plan as revealed to us an indispensable condition for growth in true wisdom, that is to say, for advance in that wisdom which is a participation in the Word Who is "a concept of the eternal Wisdom."⁴¹ By appropriating Christ's instruction in word and deed, the disciple enters ever more deeply into the triune God's infinite and inscrutable wisdom and shares analogically in it. And, as Thomas remarks in his commentary on the letter to the Romans, it is through being illuminated by the light of wisdom and grace that the saints are conformed to Christ. They share in the splendour of Christ Who is the splendour of the glory of the Father. This conformation to Christ is however dependent upon filial adoption.⁴²

³⁹ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: "[E]st similitudo exemplaris totius creaturae."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: "[H]omo per hoc in sapientia proficit, quae est propria eius perfectio prout est rationalis, quod participat verbum Dei, sicut discipulus instruitur per hoc quod recipit verbum magistri."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*: "[V]erbum est conceptus aeternae sapientiae a qua omnis sapientia hominum derivatur."

⁴² *Ad Rom* VIII, lectio VI [704]: "Ille enim qui adoptatur in filium Dei, conformatur vero filio eius. Primo quidem in iure participandae haereditatis, sicut supra dictum est v. 17: *si filii et haeredes, haeredes quidem Dei, cohaeredes autem Christi*. Secundo, in participatione splendoris ipsius. Ipse enim est genitus a patre tamquam splendor gloriae eius, Hebr. I, v. 3. Unde per hoc quod sanctos illuminat de lumine sapientiae et gratiae, facit eos fieri conformes sibi."

When read in the light of the *sed contra* it becomes clear that the contrast between divine wisdom and worldly wisdom is operative throughout the response of *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8. The quotation from Damascene refers to God's wisdom in reconciling the world to Himself through the cross of Christ: "*In the mystery of the Incarnation the wisdom and power of God are made known: the wisdom, for He found a most suitable discharge for a most heavy debt; the power, for He made the conquered conqueror.*"⁴³ Mention of the wisdom and power of God in this text evokes for St. Thomas the following text from St. Paul: "*Christ, the power of God and the Wisdom of God,*" (1 Cor 1:24), for "power and wisdom are appropriated to the Son."⁴⁴ The coupling of these texts in the *sed contra* indicates that Thomas intends the reader to allow the context of the quotation from St. Paul to colour his interpretation of Thomas's response. In this context the cross of Christ looms large just as it is strongly intimated in the quotation from Damascene. According to St. Paul, the cross manifests God's wisdom which nonetheless appears as foolishness to human wisdom, a point that is highlighted in Thomas's commentary on St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. A brief examination of Thomas's commentary on 1 Cor 1:24 shows that Scripture is the fundamental force that shapes his response at *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8.

In this commentary Thomas remarks on St. Paul's proclamation of the crucified Christ as "the power of God and the wisdom of God."⁴⁵ In doing so Thomas links what he says to his Trinitarian theology. Invoking Jn 1:3, "All things were made through him," he

⁴³ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8 *sed contra*: "Damascenus dicit, in III libro, *in mysterio incarnationis manifestata est sapientia et virtus Dei, sapientia quidem, quia invenit difficillimi solutionem pretii valde decentissimam; virtus autem, quia victum fecit rursus victorem.*"

⁴⁴ Ibid.: "[V]irtus et sapientia appropriantur filio, secundum illud I Cor. I, *Christum Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam.*"

⁴⁵ 1 Cor 1:24.

writes that Christ is the power of God because “the Father does all things through Him.”⁴⁶ It is precisely this consideration that provides the basis for the first and more general reason that Thomas offers in his first argument at *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8, for the fittingness of the assumption of human nature by the Son when he talks about the Word of God as God’s eternal concept and, as such, “the exemplar likeness of all creatures.”⁴⁷ The second reason in this argument, as we have seen, has at its point of departure the notion of the Word as “a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from Whom all man’s wisdom is derived.”⁴⁸ Thomas’s commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians makes it clear that the wisdom of Christ crucified is the expression in the *oikonomia* of the Trinitarian God’s eternal Wisdom: “[T]he Word, which is the Son, is nothing less than begotten or conceived wisdom.”⁴⁹ This brief discussion of Thomas’s remarks on 1 Cor 1:24 lend support to Joseph Wawrykow’s judgment on *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8. He writes:

[W]hile it is important to reflect, say, on the cosmic dimensions of Christ’s word as creator, it is at least as important to keep in mind the death of Christ on the cross. For, it is in the pouring out of his blood for sinful humanity on the cross, Thomas is saying in citing this Paul [sic], that the wisdom of God is fully revealed. To extend the thought: when he writes in the continuation of the first argument of the corpus of participating Christ as Wisdom as leading to human perfection, he means for us to

⁴⁶ *Ad 1 Cor* I, lectio III [61]: “Virtus quidem, inquantum per eum pater omnia operatur, Io. I, 3: *omnia per ipsum facta sunt.*”

⁴⁷ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: “[S]imilitudo exemplaris totius creaturae.”

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*: “[V]erbum est conceptus aeternae sapientiae a qua omnis sapientia hominum derivatur.”

⁴⁹ *Ad 1 Cor* I, lectio III [61]: “[I]psum verbum, quod est filius, nihil est aliud quam sapientia genita vel concepta.”

understand that the way to perfection must inevitably pass through the Wisdom disclosed on the cross.⁵⁰

The Gift of wisdom will be discussed at greater length in chapter eight since, as it is infused along with faith and charity, it is best understood in the context of an extended discussion of these two theological virtues. The point at issue in this section is that one can be truly wise only in so far as one imitates the example of Christ. Since in Christ the Second Person of the Trinity has assumed human nature, to imitate the example of Christ is at the same time to be assimilated to divine Wisdom. The logic of the assumption of human nature by the Word demands this much. Since the divine Persons are identical in their divine essence and are distinguished only by their relations of origin, it follows also that *imitatio Christi* divinizes the believer. As Emery writes: “[T]he Son conveys a likeness or resemblance to the modality through which he is referred to the Father; this resemblance is the imprint with which the Son marks the saints, for their union with God will come about through being integrated into the personal relation that the Son has with the Father.”⁵¹ Slightly adapting Emery’s comments, we can say that true wisdom is the consequence of “a union with the Father that comes about through sharing in the relation of the Son to the Father.”⁵²

This section has emphasized the importance of Christ’s moral exemplarism for Thomas and has shown how it is ontologically rooted in the life of the Trinity – in the procession of the Word. It has also discussed how the believer is assimilated to the life of the

⁵⁰ Joseph Wawrykow, “Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas,” in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. by Kent Emery, Jr., and Joseph Wawrykow (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press), pp. 185-86.

⁵¹ Emery, *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, p. 97.

⁵² *Ibid.*

Trinity by imitating the example of Christ. The next section considers Thomas's theological explanation of how it is possible by imitating the historically instantiated example of Christ to be thus assimilated to the life of the Trinity, that is to say, how it is possible for the salvific power of Christ's every word and deed to be unceasingly present throughout time in the lives of all believers. In this regard, according to Thomas, the causal efficacy in the life of the believer of all that Christ did and said goes further than simply His exemplar causality. It is not a question of imitating Christ simply as if He were an external model – and a remote one at that. The events of Christ's life, death and resurrection exert an efficient causality on the life of the believer. Faith – and the sacraments – effect a spiritual contact with Christ whereby the divine power brings to bear on our lives the salvific import of all that Christ did and said. The mysteries of the life of Christ (improperly so-called since they include Christ's death and resurrection) unfold their grace-filled power from within the intimate depths of the believer.⁵³ Indeed, as Torrell tells us, "imitation of Christ is only possible by the grace which He gives us and which has already conformed us to Him."⁵⁴ Expressed otherwise, the mysteries of Christ's life exercise their causal efficacy by way of a spiritual contact, a spiritual contact that is exercised in virtue of the divine power. The historical Christ Who has been glorified is present to us and exercises His saving activity in us by grace. Since faith and charity are expressions of grace, we can also say that the causal efficacy of the mysteries of Christ's life is exercised through these theological virtues – as well as though the sacraments of faith.

⁵³ For a more extended discussion of the mysteries of Christ's life, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères: la vie et l'oeuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Desclée, 1999), 2 vols.; see also Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, 131-135. The following discussion is indebted to Torrell.

⁵⁴ "Le Christ dans la 'spiritualité' de saint Thomas," in Kent Emery, Jr. and Joseph P. Wawrykow (eds.), *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans*, pp. 204-5: "Cette imitation du Christ n'est rendue possible que par la grâce qu'il nous donne et qui nous a déjà conformés à lui."

In what follows it is not possible however to avoid mention of exemplar causality since the effect of a cause seeks to assimilate itself to this same cause as to its exemplar. The virtual presence by grace of the mysteries of Christ's life to all human beings at all times and in all places, which is effected by the divine causal efficiency, is inseparable from the imitation of these mysteries in the life of the believer, by which imitation the believer seeks union with the divine cause of the presence of grace. This imitation itself is an expression of the presence of God's grace. Divine efficient causality and divine exemplar causality prove to be two aspects of one and the same operation of grace in the life of the believer. It is nevertheless important to be clear that the latter is grounded in and is ordered towards the former.

2. The causal efficacy of the mysteries of Christ's life

Thomas's doctrine concerning the instrumentality of Christ's humanity reaches to everything that Christ did and suffered during His earthly life. To quote Torrell, "each and every act that Christ performed in his humanity has been and continues to be the bearer of salvific efficacy"⁵⁵ because Christ's humanity is the instrument of His divinity and the divine power extends to all things. It transcends the space and time. In other words, the divine power is exercised by virtual or spiritual contact since it is present at all times and in all places.⁵⁶ Christ's Resurrection, for example, acts through the divine power as the efficient cause of ours and "this power by its presence is in touch with all places and times; and such virtual

⁵⁵ Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, p. 132.

⁵⁶ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 3: "Quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora. Et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem huius efficientiae." See also *STh* I, q. 8 a. 3: "[E]st in omnibus per potentiam, in quantum omnia eius potestati subduntur."

contact suffices for its efficiency.”⁵⁷ In a like manner, we can say that the divine power furnishes the efficient cause whereby the salvific import of all the mysteries of Christ’s life reaches all times and places: “[A]ll other things which Christ did and endured in His humanity are profitable to our salvation through the power of the Godhead,”⁵⁸ which power has universal extension both temporally and spatially. The deeds and sufferings of Christ, as historical occurrences, have ceased to exist. As historical events they remain precisely such – historical events. Their salvific efficacy however reaches all times and places by virtue of the divine motion. In other words, virtual contact ensures the efficiency of Christ’s deeds and sufferings.

The efficient causality of all that Christ did and endured cannot therefore be understood in terms of physical causality. Here we are dealing with the divine causal power, a power that radically transcends that of created causal agents. As eternal, God is not subjected to the conditions of created temporal reality. Consequently, as Torrell explains, “Inasmuch as it operates *in virtute divina*, the act posed by Christ is not subject to time, for God has the privilege in his eternity of touching beings which for us are past or future, as if they were present.”⁵⁹ The instrumental causality of Christ’s humanity can therefore impress its effects on humans of all times and places without them coming into actual contact with Christ’s humanity in its instrumental causality, that is to say, without them being historically present actually to witness His deeds and His sufferings.

⁵⁷ Ibid.: “Quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora. Et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem huius efficientiae.”

⁵⁸ Ibid.: “[A]lia quae Christus in sua humanitate fecit vel passus est, ex virtute divinitatis eius sunt nobis salutaria.”

⁵⁹ Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, p. 138.

The notion of spiritual contact is crucial in explaining the salvific efficacy of all that Christ did and said during His earthly ministry and so Thomas naturally raises it on several occasions in his Christological discussions. Thus, for example, in treating the efficiency of Christ's Passion he entertains the objection that contact is required for corporeal agency to act efficiently – “hence even Christ cleansed the leper by touching him *in order to show that His flesh had saving power*.”⁶⁰ Obviously, understood in this way Christ's passion could not touch all human beings, thereby bringing about their salvation. Thomas's response to this objection, however, invokes the notion of spiritual contact through faith and the sacraments: “Christ's Passion, although corporeal, has yet a spiritual effect from the Godhead united: and therefore it secures its efficacy by spiritual contact – namely by faith and the sacraments of faith.”⁶¹ This solution obviously goes beyond a purely physical conception of causality and a quantitative conception of causal contact.⁶² As so often is the case, Thomas's discourse appeals to the concept of analogy.

Even the dead body of Christ continues to function as an instrument of His divinity. Since the Godhead was not separated by death from Christ's body, “whatever befell Christ's flesh, even when the soul was departed, was conducive to salvation in virtue of the Godhead united.”⁶³ Expressed otherwise, “Christ's death was indeed corporeal; but the body was the

⁶⁰ *STh* III, q. 48 a. 6 *obj.* 2: “[U]nde etiam et Christus tangendo mundavit leprosum, *ut ostenderet carnem suam salutiferam virtutem habere*.”

⁶¹ *STh* III, q. 48 a. 6 ad 2: “[P]assio Christi, licet sit corporalis, habet tamen spiritualem virtutem ex divinitate unita. Et ideo per spiritualem contactum efficaciam sortitur, scilicet per fidem et fidei sacramenta.”

⁶² See Bouëssé, “La causalité efficiente instrumentale,” p. 389.

⁶³ *STh* III, q. 50 a. 6: “[Q]uidquid contigit circa carnem Christi, etiam anima separata, fuit nobis salutiferum virtute divinitatis unitae.”

instrument of the Godhead united to Him, working by Its power, although dead.”⁶⁴ Nothing that happened to Christ could be indifferent to our salvation, not even death, paradoxical though that might be since, in Torrell’s words, “it is a question of the death of Life itself.”⁶⁵ The Ascension furnishes another example: “Christ’s Ascension is the cause of our salvation by way not of merit, but of efficiency, as was stated ... regarding His Resurrection.”⁶⁶ Thomas does not elaborate this point here. Torrell’s observation is well taken: by this stage, Thomas’s position is very clearly established and does not require further development.⁶⁷

It would be wrong to infer from the examples given that Thomas restricts his teaching concerning the instrumental causality of Christ’s humanity to the great moments of the Paschal mystery. To reiterate the point already made, “all Christ’s actions and sufferings operate instrumentally in virtue of His Godhead for the salvation of men.”⁶⁸ Christ’s salvific causality cannot be reduced to a number of acts. Everything that Christ did before his death on the cross and everything that he did after His death possesses a salvific causality. In what follows however we will focus on Thomas’s consideration of Christ’s resurrection in order to deepen our understanding of its causal efficacy. The focus of the following discussion is *STh* III, q. 56, which is concerned with the causality of Christ’s resurrection and which contains two articles dealing with the resurrection of the body and of the soul respectively. In this question Thomas draws upon metaphysical resources both from Aristotle and from the

⁶⁴ *STh* III, q. 50 a. 6 ad 3: “[M]ors Christi fuit quidem corporalis, sed corpus illud fuit instrumentum divinitatis sibi unitae, operans in virtute eius etiam mortuum.”

⁶⁵ Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, p. 478: “[P]uisqu’il s’agit de la mort de la Vie elle-même.”

⁶⁶ *STh* III, q. 57 a. 6 ad 1: “[A]scensio Christi est causa nostrae salutis, non per modum meriti, sed per modum efficientiae, sicut supra de resurrectione dictum est.”

⁶⁷ See Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, pp. 667-68.

⁶⁸ *STh* III, q. 48 a. 6: “[O]mnes actiones et passiones Christi instrumentaliter operantur, in virtute divinitatis, ad salutem humanam.”

Pseudo-Dionysius in order to give conceptual expression to the belief that Christ's resurrection exercises its causal efficacy for all human beings at all times and in all places. In this regard we will see that the notions of efficient and exemplar causality play a central explanatory role. Efficient causality has an ontological priority over exemplar causality and so the exemplar causality of Christ's resurrection for us depends upon its efficient causality while at the same time, because every effect seeks to be assimilated to its cause, the resurrected/justified soul seeks to be conformed to the rising Christ. Discussion of the justification of the soul leads into the question of grace since the former is the effect of the latter. The next chapter will take up at greater length Thomas's doctrine concerning grace.

The *locus classicus* for the doctrine that the instrumentality of Christ's humanity reaches to everything that He did and suffered during His earthly life is to be found at *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1. Thomas begins his response by appealing to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*:

As stated in 2 *Metaphysics*, text 4: *Whatever is first in any order is the cause of all that come after it.* But Christ's Resurrection was the first in the order of our resurrection ... Hence Christ's Resurrection must be the cause of ours: and this is what the Apostle says (1 Cor. xv. 20, 21): *Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep; for by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead.*⁶⁹

⁶⁹ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1: "[I]llud quod est primum in quolibet genere, est causa omnium eorum quae sunt post, ut dicitur in II *Metaphys.* Primum autem in genere nostrae resurrectionis fuit resurrectio Christi ... Unde oportet quod resurrectio Christi sit causa nostrae resurrectionis. Et hoc est quod apostolus dicit, I Cor. XV, *Christus resurrexit a mortuis primitiae dormientium, quoniam quidem per hominem mors, et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum.*" See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* II, c. 1 (993b24).

It might seem at the outset of this response that Thomas deals with the question of the causality of Christ's resurrection purely on a philosophical plane, that is to say, in terms of the causality of what is first in a particular order. In reality, however, Thomas enunciates this philosophical principle in service of his theological reflection in order to elucidate an element of the faith. Consequently, as Torrell writes, "it is not Aristotle who grounds his conclusion, it is rather the New Testament."⁷⁰ Torrell also points out Thomas's astute selection of the text from St. Paul: while the 'first fruits' of the harvest are blessed and offered to God they are also supposed to sanctify the rest of the harvest. Jn 5:21 gives powerful expression to the notion that the Word of God is "the principle of human life-giving": "*As the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life; so the Son also giveth life to whom He will.*"⁷¹ The Aristotelian principle, once adjusted, gives expression to this point.⁷²

In addition to Aristotle, Thomas also calls the Pseudo-Dionysius into his service in order to explicate the causality of Christ's resurrection with regard to our bodies. Thomas draws upon *The Celestial Hierarchy* in asserting that in the natural order established by God every cause acts on what is closest to it and, through what is closest to it, it exerts its influence on things that are more remote.⁷³ Thus, for example, fire heats the air nearest to it and then, through the air, it heats bodies that are further away from it. In an analogical manner God first enlightens those substances which are closest to Him in the hierarchy of

⁷⁰ Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, p. 623: "[C]e n'est pas Aristote qui fonde sa conclusion, c'est le Nouveau Testament."

⁷¹ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1: "Nam principium humanae vivificationis est verbum Dei ... unde et ipse dicit, Ioan. V, *sicut pater suscitavit mortuos et vivificavit, sic et filius quos vult vivificavit.*"

⁷² See *ibid.*: "C'est donc cela que traduit – un fois rectifiée ! – le principe aristotélicien de la causalité du maximum."

⁷³ See *The Celestial Hierarchy* c. 13 in *Pseudo-Dionysius : The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 177-79.

being and then through them He enlightens others that are further away. The same causal principle is applied to Christ's resurrection and its causal influence on all other human bodies: "[T]he Word of God first bestows immortal life upon that body which is naturally united with Himself, and through it works the resurrection in all other bodies."⁷⁴ These examples – and thus the causality of Christ's resurrection with regard to our bodies – are grounded in a metaphysics of participation. Thus, whatever is hot is hot by virtue of participating in the heat of the fire; whatever is enlightened is enlightened in so far as it participates in the divine light; and, the resurrection of all bodies participates in the bestowal of immortal life upon Christ's body by the Word of God.

Implicit in Thomas's argumentation at *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1, moreover, is the impossibility of an infinite regress in *per se* causes.⁷⁵ Just as one cannot posit an infinite causal regress with regard to heat and enlightenment, neither can there be an infinite causal series of bodily resurrections. The resurrection of Christ's body however belongs to the same genus as all corporal resurrections while the cause of the resurrection of the body must reside outside the genus. This cause is in fact the Word of God Who first bestows life on the body that He united with Himself and Who employs this resurrection as "the secondary and as it were instrumental cause"⁷⁶ of the resurrection of all other bodies. Thus, since it is according to His humanity that Christ rose again and since His humanity is the instrument of His

⁷⁴*STh* III, q. 56 a. 1: "[V]erbum Dei primo attribuit vitam immortalem corpori sibi naturaliter unito, et per ipsum operatur resurrectionem in omnibus aliis."

⁷⁵ For a discussion of this issue, see Patterson Brown, "Infinite Causal Regression," in Anthony Kenny, ed., *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays* (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 214-36.

⁷⁶ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 2: "[R]esurrectio autem Christi est causa secundaria, et quasi instrumentalis." As Torrell remarks, the presence of *quasi* is meant to remind the reader of the particular quality of this "instrument" which is not inert or separated but rather conjoined, animated, and free. See Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, n. 12, p. 627.

Godhead and works by Its power, Christ's Resurrection is the efficient cause of ours "through the Divine power whose office it is to quicken the dead."⁷⁷ As already stated, the divine power is exercised by virtual or spiritual contact since it is present at all times and in all places.⁷⁸ Since Christ's Resurrection acts through the divine power its causal efficacy "is in touch with all places and times; and such virtual contact suffices for its efficiency."⁷⁹

STh III, q. 56 a. 1, comprises one of only two articles in a question that deals with the causality of Christ's resurrection: the first article deals with the resurrection of the body, the second with the resurrection of the soul. The rationale for Thomas's approach is very clear: the causality of Christ's resurrection applies to man in the totality of his being as a composite of body and soul, that is to say, as psychosomatically constituted.⁸⁰ Nevertheless, as

⁷⁷ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 3: "[V]irtute divina, cuius proprium est mortuos vivificare."

⁷⁸ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 3: "Quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora. Et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem huius efficientiae."

⁷⁹ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 3: "[R]esurrectio Christi est causa efficiens nostrae resurrectionis virtute divina, cuius proprium est mortuos vivificare. Quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora. Et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem huius efficientiae."

⁸⁰ See *SCG* IV, c. 79 [10]: "Ad ostendendum etiam resurrectionem carnis futuram evidens ratio suffragatur, suppositis his quae in superioribus sunt ostensa. Ostensum est enim in secundo animas hominum immortales esse. Remanent igitur post corpora a corporibus absolutae. Manifestum est etiam ex his quae in secundo dicta sunt, quod anima corpori naturaliter unitur: est enim secundum suam essentiam corporis forma. Est igitur contra naturam animae absque corpore esse. Nihil autem quod est contra naturam, potest esse perpetuum. Non igitur perpetuo erit anima absque corpore. Cum igitur perpetuo maneat, oportet eam corpori iterato coniungi: quod est resurgere. Immortalitas igitur animarum exigere videtur resurrectionem corporum futuram"; and, *Ad 1 Cor* XV, lectio 2 [924]: "[S]i negetur resurrectio corporis, non de facili, imo difficile est sustinere immortalitatem animae. Constat enim quod anima naturaliter unitur corpori, separatur autem ab eo contra suam naturam, et per accidens. Unde anima exuta a corpore, quamdiu est sine corpore, est imperfecta. Impossibile autem est quod illud quod est naturale et per se, sit finitum et quasi nihil; et illud quod est contra naturam et per accidens, sit infinitum, si

Thomas's speculations reveal, one cannot treat the soul and the body in the same way, particularly since "the soul lives by grace, and ... the body lives by the soul."⁸¹ Thomas's language reveals this difference of treatment: in the first article he speaks of resurrection; in the second he speaks more in terms of justification which, stated very succinctly means "the remission of sins."⁸² Indeed, the tenor of *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2, is indicated at the beginning of the *sed contra*: "The Apostle says (Rom iv. 25: *He rose again for our justification*, which is nothing else than the resurrection of souls."⁸³ Quoting a gloss on Psalm 29:6 Thomas intimates that justification means the resurrection of the soul in the present: "*Christ's resurrection is the cause of ours, both of the soul at present, and of the body in the future.*"⁸⁴ To speak of the resurrection of the soul is thus to speak metaphorically since the soul is immortal.⁸⁵ The justification of the soul is accomplished by its being conformed with the rising Christ, of which justification Christ's resurrection is the exemplar cause. Mere imitation of Christ's resurrection however could not on its own realize this conformity; in other words, exemplar causality is a necessary but not sufficient condition for our

anima semper duret sine corpore." For a treatment of Thomas's hylomorphic anthropology, see Gilles Emery, O.P., "The Unity of Man, Body and Soul, in St. Thomas Aquinas," in *Trinity, Church, and the Human Person*, pp. 209-305.

⁸¹ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2: "[A]nima vivit per gratiam, et quod corpus vivit per animam."

⁸² *STh* I-II, q. 113 a. 1 *sed contra*: "[R]emissio peccatorum est iustificatio."

⁸³ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2 *sed contra*: "[A]postolus dicit, Rom. IV, *resurrexit propter iustificationem nostram*, quae nihil aliud est quam resurrectio animarum."

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*: "[S]uper illud Psalmi, *ad vesperum demorabitur fletus*, dicit Glossa quod *resurrectio Christi causa est resurrectionis nostrae et animae in praesenti, et corporis in futuro.*"

⁸⁵ Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, p. 634: "Aucune objection ne fera remarquer que l'âme étant immortelle on ne saurait parler de résurrection à son propos; il est donc clair pour tous qu'il ne s'agit que d'une notion métaphorique."

justification. The causal influence of the exemplar in fact acts through the medium of efficient causality. The exemplar causality of Christ's resurrection thus flows from its efficient causality, which fact ensures its efficacy. This relationship between efficient and exemplar causality explains the structure of *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2, where Thomas first of all explains the resurrection of the soul in terms that remind us of his response in the first article, that is to say, in terms of instrumental efficient causality.⁸⁶ He then remarks that Christ's resurrection is in a like manner "an exemplar cause with regard to the resurrection of souls, because even in our souls we must be conformed with the rising Christ."⁸⁷

As Torrell astutely observes, we here witness an application of a general law: "[E]very agent produces its like" (*omne agens agit sibi simile*).⁸⁸ Every effect seeks to be assimilated to its cause which in the case of the resurrection means that the life that Christ has won for us is deiform⁸⁹ since "The efficacy of Christ's Resurrection reaches souls ... from the virtue of the Godhead personally united with it."⁹⁰ Thomas once again has recourse to a metaphysics of participation in order to explain this deiformity of the justified: "[S]ouls

⁸⁶ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2: "[R]esurrectio Christi agit in virtute divinitatis. Quae quidem se extendit non solum ad resurrectionem corporum, sed etiam ad resurrectionem animarum, a Deo enim est et quod anima vivit per gratiam, et quod corpus vivit per animam. Et ideo resurrectio Christi habet instrumentaliter virtutem effectivam non solum respectu resurrectionis corporum, sed etiam respectu resurrectionis animarum."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*: "Similiter autem habet rationem exemplaritatis respectu resurrectionis animarum. Quia Christo resurgenti debemus etiam secundum animam conformari."

⁸⁸ See, for example, *STh* I, q. 19 a. 4; q. 110 a. 2; q. 115 a. 1; *ScG* II, c. 20 [3]; c. 21 [9]; c. 23 [4]; *De ver* q. 2 a. 3. See also Torrell, *Le Christ en ses mystères*, p. 631.

⁸⁹ *Ad Rom* VI, lectio 2 [490]: "Effectus autem conformatur causae; unde et vita quam Christus resurgens acquisivit, est deiformis."

⁹⁰ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2 ad 2: "[E]fficacia resurrectionis Christi pertingit ad animas, non per propriam virtutem ipsius corporis resurgentis, sed per virtutem divinitatis, cui personaliter unitur."

become good and just by sharing in the Divine goodness.”⁹¹ This becoming good and justification by participating in the divine goodness is however possible only because of the exemplar causality of Christ’s resurrection: “[A]s to exemplarity ... Christ’s Resurrection is the cause of newness of life, which comes through grace or justice.”⁹² All the while we must bear in mind that *omne agens agit sibi simile* and that the soul justified by the resurrection of Christ necessarily seeks to be assimilated to the efficient cause of its justification, that is to say, the justified soul seeks conformation with God’s justice which employs Christ’s resurrection as “the secondary, and as it were the instrumental cause.”⁹³

Bearing in mind that justification is the effect of grace,⁹⁴ grace thus bears a Christological impress and justification is Christologically accomplished. Justification moreover is not effected once and for all in the life of an individual. To be justified “implies a movement towards justice, as heating implies a movement towards heat.”⁹⁵ The justice in question is of course God’s justice. Daniel Haynes describes Thomas’s understanding in terms of deification, which is also the effect of grace: “Deification is not an isolated work of merited righteousness, but it is a dynamic process grounded in the grace of God.”⁹⁶ Grace elevates man’s capacities for knowing and loving so that he can know and love God with the knowledge of Himself that God has revealed to him and with the love that God has bestowed

⁹¹ *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2 ad 1: “[P]articipando divinam bonitatem animae fiunt iustae et bonae.”

⁹² *STh* III, q. 56 a. 2 ad 3: “[Q]uantum ad exemplaritatem ... resurrectio autem est causa novitatis vitae, quae est per gratiam sive iustitiam.”

⁹³ *Ibid.*: “[I]ustitia Dei est causa prima resurrectionis nostrae, resurrectio autem Christi est causa secundaria, et quasi instrumentalis.”

⁹⁴ See *STh* I-II, q. 113 a. 1.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: “[I]ustificatio passive accepta importat motum ad iustitiam; sicut et calefactio motum ad calorem.”

⁹⁶ Daniel Haynes, “The Metaphysics of Christian Ethics: Radical Orthodoxy and Theosis,” *The Heythrop Journal* 52 (2001), p. 668.

upon him. Grace is the ground of the theological virtues – faith, hope, and charity – which perfect intellect and will. We ought however never to forget that this grace is mediated to us by Christ’s humanity as the instrument of His divinity.⁹⁷ Faith, hope, and charity are thus mediated to us by Christ’s humanity. Thomas, writing about Christ’s Passion, therefore states that “it works its effect in them to whom it is applied through faith and charity and the sacraments of faith.”⁹⁸ He elaborates this position a little bit more in the *De Veritate*:

Thus the humanity of Christ is the instrumental cause of justification. This cause is applied to us spiritually through faith and bodily through the sacraments, because Christ’s humanity is both spirit and body. This is done to the end that we may receive within ourselves the effect of sanctification, which is had through Christ.⁹⁹

The implications of the instrumental causality of Christ’s humanity and the virtual contact of His deeds and suffering with all times and places on account of the divine power operating through it are brought out forcefully by Torrell:

⁹⁷ See *STh* I-II, q. 112 a. 1 ad 1: “[H]umanitas Christi est sicut quoddam organum divinitatis eius; ut Damascenus dicit, in III libro. Instrumentum autem non agit actionem agentis principalis propria virtute, sed virtute principalis agentis. Et ideo humanitas Christi non causat gratiam propria virtute, sed virtute divinitatis adiunctae, ex qua actiones humanitatis Christi sunt salutes.”

⁹⁸ *STh* III, q. 49 a. 3 ad 1: “[P]assio Christi sortitur effectum suum in illis quibus applicatur per fidem et caritatem, et per fidei sacramenta.”

⁹⁹ *De ver* q. 27 a. 4: “[H]umanitas Christi est instrumentalis causa iustificationis; quae quidem causa nobis applicatur *spiritualiter* per *fidem*, et *corporaliter* per *sacramenta*: quia humanitas Christi et spiritus et corpus est; ad hoc scilicet ut effectum sanctificationis, quae est Christi, in nobis percipiamus.” See also *STh* III, q. 48 a. 6 ad 2; and, III, q. 49 a. 1 ad 4.

It is not only God-Trinity who is present to each man in the state of grace in a constant and universal manner. It is also Christ in his humanity, and not only as a presence of memory or an intentional presence by way of knowledge and love, but as a wholly efficacious presence of grace. The historical Christ, today glorified, touches us by each of the acts of his earthly life, which is thus the bearer of a divinizing life and energy.¹⁰⁰

Expressed otherwise, every word and deed of the historical Christ effects within us a dynamic process of justification. This process of justification necessarily entails sincerely applying oneself to the imitation of Christ's example – which, as we have seen, is the same as conforming oneself to God's Word, the concept of eternal Wisdom. We can also describe the process of justification in terms of increase of grace within us as well as in terms of perfection of the *imago Dei*. Thus, J. Mark Armitage writes that "it is through the imitation of Christ that the believer participates in the divine nature by way of likeness, and is assimilated to the *imago Dei* through conformity with the one in whom the image is restored."¹⁰¹

Since faith, hope, and charity are functions of grace, it follows that growth in these virtues is intimately connected with appropriating Christ's instruction and imitating His example. Increase in faith, hope, and charity and conformation to Christ are inseparable from each other. Later chapters will examine Thomas's doctrine concerning increase in faith and charity. For the moment it suffices to note that because these theological virtues elevate the human capacities for knowing and loving, we must by logical extension once again assert that appropriation of Christ's teaching and imitation of His example are indispensable for the

¹⁰⁰ Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, p. 139.

¹⁰¹ J. Mark Armitage, "A Certain Rectitude of Order: Jesus and Justification according to Aquinas," *The Thomist* 72 (2008), p. 59.

attainment of the most exalted exercise of knowing and loving possible for humans in this life. By grace the Word of God, the concept of eternal Wisdom – by Whom God knows Himself and all things and through Whom He has created all things – works His power within us thereby deepening our participation in His Wisdom.

Let us summarize the content of this section. We have considered how for Thomas the salvific import of all the mysteries of Christ's life – and not simply His death, burial, and resurrection – reach individual believers of all times and places. The fundamental rationale for this efficacy is grounded in the fact that Christ's humanity, assumed by the Second Person of the Trinity, is united to the Godhead. God, having united Christ's humanity to Himself, employs this humanity instrumentally in order to exert His divine power in the lives of those who believe. Thomas has recourse to notions of causality in order to explain the virtual presence of all the mysteries of Christ's life to all people at all times and in all places. Efficient causality explains how it is the same divine power that raised Christ from the dead that also causes the resurrection of all human beings as composites of body and soul. The exemplar causality of Christ's resurrection operates by virtue of its efficient causality but, unlike the latter which "extends to the resurrection of the good and the wicked alike," the former "extends properly only to the just, who are made conformable with His Sonship, according to Rom. viii. 29."¹⁰²

3. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to highlight the significance of Christ's Incarnation for human knowing and willing. This significance is predicated on the hypostatic union. Thus, in

¹⁰² *STh* III, q. 56 a. 1 ad 3: "Licet autem efficientia resurrectionis Christi se extendat ad resurrectionem tam bonorum quam malorum, exemplaritas tamen eius se extendit proprie solum ad bonos, qui sunt facti conformes filiationis ipsius, ut dicitur Rom. VIII."

imitating Christ we habituate our ways on knowing and loving not to any kind of human exemplar but rather to the perfect human exemplar because Christ's humanity is the instrument of His divinity. In this sense, the human attainment of Beatitude can be accomplished only Christologically. Christ's moral example is grounded in His eternal procession as the Second Person of the Trinity and, consequently, imitation of Christ effects an assimilation of the believer to God's own Wisdom in a way that is proportioned to human nature.

Assimilation to God's Wisdom rules out the idea of imitating Christ simply as if He were an external model. Assimilation to divine Wisdom, which is the same as the movement of the believer towards ultimate Beatitude, is not possible for human beings on the basis of their natural powers alone. Divine assistance is required, that is to say, grace is necessary. It is precisely by means of grace that Christ exercises His efficient causality whereby the salvific power of all He said and did unfolds in the faithful. It is moreover this very grace that empowers us to recognize Christ as the Son of God and to imitate Him in order to have the same mind as He has, that is to say, to conform ourselves to Him. The efficient and exemplar causality of the mysteries of Christ's life furnish two aspects of the operation of one and the same grace of God in the life of the believer: the interior renewal accomplished by the efficient causal power of God, whereby the mysteries of Christ's life are present within the life of the believer, expresses itself in a new life which seeks to conform itself to the divine exemplar. Interestingly, in his recent book on the events of Holy Week, Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI makes this point, with due reference to the Fathers of the Church, in terms of the categories of *sacramentum* and *exemplum*:

[B]y *sacramentum* they mean, not any particular sacrament, but rather the entire mystery of Christ – his life and death – in which he draws close to us through his

Spirit, and transforms us. But precisely because this *sacramentum* truly “cleanses” us, renewing us from within, it unleashes a dynamic of a new life. The command to do as Jesus did is no mere moral appendix to the mystery, let alone an antithesis it. It follows from the inner dynamic of gift with which the Lord renews us and draws us into what is his.¹⁰³

Aidan Nichols expresses this reality in more Scholastic terms: “[T]he work of Christ is not just the efficient cause of grace, it is also grace’s exemplar cause. Grace in us takes the form of a real participation in the engraced being of Christ, a sharing in that being through an indrawing into the form of his mysteries.”¹⁰⁴

Having concentrated on the Christological aspect of grace in the latter part of this chapter, we now pass on to its Pneumatological dimension in the next chapter. All the while it is crucial to bear in mind that it is one and same mystery of grace with which we are dealing. Discussion of grace necessarily involves reference to the theological virtues as well as to the human faculties of intellect and will. Subsequent chapters will elaborate these aspects of Thomas’s doctrine.

¹⁰³ Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, part two. *Holy Week: From the Entrance into Jerusalem to the Resurrection* (London and San Francisco: Catholic Truth Society and Ignatius Press, 2011), p. 62.

¹⁰⁴ Nichols, *Discovering Aquinas*, p. 120.

CHAPTER V

THE TRANSFORMATION WROUGHT BY GRACE

Man has been created to the image of the Trinity on account of his capacity to know and to love God. In chapter one we clarified the relationship of interdependence between the likeness of analogy aspect of the image and the likeness of conformation aspect. The likeness of analogy furnishes the basis for the likeness of conformation while the likeness of conformation constitutes the basis of the perfection of the image according to the likeness of analogy aspect. The growth in the image of the triune God is effected through a progressive assimilation to the Word through the Holy Spirit. The last chapter focused on the dynamics of the assimilation *to the Word* with regard to the intellect and will. As the argument of this book moves forward, therefore, sight ought not to be lost of what has just been established concerning the Christological character of the moral life. This chapter carries our considerations forward by an extended treatment of the dynamics of assimilation *through the Holy Spirit*. We should recall throughout all these analyses, however, that wherever one Person of the Trinity is present, there dwell all three Persons. Thus, Thomas can also write that “Just as there is no bodily member that is not quickened by the spirit of the body so too there is no member of Christ who does not possess the Spirit.”¹

The extended treatment of the dynamics of assimilation through the Holy Spirit comprises this chapter on grace, the next two chapters on faith, and the final two chapters on charity. The theological virtues of faith and charity are functions of grace, that is to say, of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Through faith and charity we are assimilated to the Word

¹ *Ad Rom VIII*, lectio II [627]: “Sicut non est membrum corporis quod per spiritum corporis non vivificatur, ita non est membrum Christi, qui spiritum Christi non habet.”

through the Holy Spirit. Expressed otherwise, the dynamics of faith and charity conform the believer ever more and more to Christ and, through Christ, to the Trinitarian inner life of knowing and loving that we attempted to delineate in chapter two. While intimately connected with the preceding chapters on Thomas's Trinitarian theology and on the mission of the Word, the remaining chapters are also intimately connected with those chapters in which we have dealt with Thomas's anthropology. In particular, the dynamics of the interinvolvement of intellect and will delineated in chapter three are crucial to an appreciation of the argument that is unfolded in the remainder of this book. Grace perfects nature and transports the believer to hitherto unimagined heights of knowing and loving, a knowing and loving that participates ever more deeply in God's own knowing and loving. The life of grace cultivates what we might term a hermeneutics of objectivity, that is to say, an interpretation of reality that accords increasingly with that of the Trinitarian God since it is the fruit of knowing and willing that participates more deeply in God's knowing and willing. As indicated in the Introduction to this work, conformation to Christ through the Holy Spirit is the basis for a hermeneutics of objectivity, according to which hermeneutics the human intellect and will are formed analogically so as to exhibit in a human mode the dynamics of the inner life of the Trinity. As a consequence of this analogical formation the human being increasingly views reality in the light of its divine source and in a manner analogous to that of its divine source.

This chapter begins with a treatment precisely of this notion of grace as a participation in the divine nature. Grace so perfects human nature that man is capable of knowing and loving God as his ultimate Beatitude, something not possible for unaided human nature. We are enabled to know and to love God as our final Beatitude on account of the theological virtues, namely faith, hope, and charity. With our treatment of the theological virtues we begin to notice the transformative effects of grace: in this instance, the transposition of the

notion of ‘virtue’ into a theological context necessitates a transformation of the Aristotelian concept of ‘virtue’. The theological virtues furnish the principles of the infused cardinal virtues which differ from the acquired virtues in that the latter dispose man with regard to the nature whereby he is a man, whereas the infused cardinal virtues are necessary if he is to be disposed with regard “to a participation of the Divine Nature.”² Thomas posits the necessity not only of the infused virtues but also of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The latter, as we will see, dispose the believer to be more easily and promptly moved and they effect an intimate conjunction between divine and human action. The result is an exalted form of human knowing and willing. The final section of this chapter brings out the exalted manner of knowing and willing effected by grace by contrasting it with natural knowing and loving.

1. Grace as participation in the divine nature

It is important for a correct appreciation of Thomas’s doctrine concerning grace to appreciate the centrality of Pet 1:4 in his speculations. According to this text God “*hath given us most great and most precious promises; that by these you may be made partakers of the Divine Nature.*”³ That Thomas’s doctrine concerning grace is solidly grounded in Scripture cannot be highlighted enough in the face of a tendency to view it as simply “the application of Aristotelian categories to Christian theology, according to which sanctifying grace as an accidental quality of the soul is at the centre of concern,” as Keating expresses the point.⁴ 2

² *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3: “[I]n ordine ad naturam divinam participatam.”

³ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3: “[D]icitur II Petr. I, *maxima et pretiosa nobis promissa donavit, ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae.*”

⁴ Daniel A. Keating, “Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas,” in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daniel Keating and John Yocum (London/New York: T&T Clark, 2004), p. 154.

Pet 1:4 constitutes “the biblical medium, as it were”⁵ of Thomas’s teaching on grace. It serves to emphasize that the gift of grace confers on the Christian a genuine participation in the divine life: grace “is nothing short of a partaking of the Divine Nature.”⁶ By grace God deifies the Christian, “bestowing a partaking of the Divine Nature by a participated likeness.”⁷ While the language of participation in the divine Good abounds at *STh* I-II, q. 110, in particular, it ought not to be forgotten that this language and the doctrine it communicates are inspired by the biblical text. At the heart of Thomas’s doctrine of divinization, which is communicated in the language of participation, is what Keating describes as “The biblical account of our new nature – of the new creation in Christ.”⁸ This point ought to be kept in mind in what follows. As Keating observes:

His [Thomas’s] conclusion, that sanctifying grace is a created accidental quality in the soul, does not somehow put grace at one remove from God; rather, it establishes (in the categories Aquinas was using) the genuine rootedness of God’s transforming power in the soul, and it attempts to account for the biblical assertion that we have been given a ‘new nature’ in Christ, and not merely access to external helps and aids. The notion of grace as our participation in the divine nature assures us that this grace rooted in the soul is never cut off from its source in God.⁹

⁵ Ibid., p. 154.

⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 112 a. 1: “[N]ihil aliud sit quam quaedam participatio divinae naturae.”

⁷ Ibid.: “[S]olus Deus deificet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quandam similitudinis participationem”

⁸ Keating, “Justification, Sanctification and Divinization in Thomas Aquinas,” p. 154.

⁹ Ibid., pp. 154-55.

While various other Scriptural passages from St. John's Gospel and St. Paul's letters nourish Thomas's reflections in the *Summa*, I will limit myself to the texts from the letter to the Ephesians that are employed by Thomas in the course of *STh* I-II, q. 110. The first of these appears in the first article: "*He hath predestinated us into the adoption of children . . . unto the praise of the glory of His grace.*"¹⁰ Thomas quotes this text in the context of the notion of predestination, that is to say, "inasmuch as God gratuitously and not from merits predestines or elects some."¹¹ In his commentary on the letter to the Ephesians, Thomas expounds on the notion of predestination. It has two effects, namely grace and glory. These effects are clearly related as is indicated in this comment: "Within the realm of what is willed [by God], grace can be identified as a reason for the effects which are oriented towards glory."¹² Thomas is here at pains to rule out the idea that any reason for grace could be found on the part of human beings themselves. Such a reason would also count for their predestination and would be tantamount to saying that "the source of good works was in man by himself and not by grace."¹³ To hold this teaching would be to embrace the heresy of the Pelagians. When interpreted correctly, however, the Scriptural text indicates that God bestows His predestining grace without regard for one's preceding merits.

The second text from Ephesians employed by Thomas occurs towards the end of the response of article three. Eph 5:8 states: "*For you were heretofore darkness, but now light in*

¹⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 1: "[D]icitur enim ad Ephes. I, *praedestinavit nos in adoptionem filiorum, in laudem gloriae gratiae suae.*"

¹¹ Ibid.: "[I]n quantum Deus gratuito, et non ex meritis, aliquos praedestinavit sive elegit."

¹² *In Eph* I, lectio I: "Effectuum autem qui ad gloriam ordinantur, potest quidem ex parte voliti assignari ratio, scilicet gratia."

¹³ Ibid.: "[G]ratiae, quae est primus effectus, non potest aliqua ratio assignari ex parte hominis, quod sit ratio praedestinationis; quia hoc esset ponere, quod principium boni operis sit in homine ex seipso et non per gratiam."

the Lord. Walk then as children of the light.”¹⁴ Thomas employs this text in support of the claim that “the light of grace which is a participation of the Divine Nature is something besides the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light.”¹⁵ His remarks on this text in his commentary on the letter to the Ephesians indicate that being “heretofore darkness” means being “blinded by ignorance and error.”¹⁶ To walk “as children of the light” in contrast means to behave as a child of the light, which happens in two ways: “[F]irst in reference to the substance or kind of actions he performs, then in reference to the manner or intention he does them with.”¹⁷ This point ought to be kept in mind in the next paragraph which outlines Thomas’s teaching with regard to the relationship between grace and the virtues. More generally, the fundamental guiding force of Scripture in Thomas’s discussion of grace ought to be borne in mind at all times.

In commenting on the teaching of Thomas’s teacher, Albert the Great, on the relationship obtaining between grace and the virtues, T.A. Graf observes: “Albert understood the relationship of grace to the virtues through the analogy of soul and its faculties. Grace and soul bestow the first act: being alive. The activity of both is expanded by the powers which proceed from each, e.g., virtues, whose foundation they give.”¹⁸ Following Albert’s lead

¹⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3: “[A]postolus dicit, ad Ephes. V, *eratis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino, ut filii lucis ambulate.*”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: “[I]psum lumen gratiae, quod est participatio divinae naturae, est aliquid praeter virtutes infusas, quae a lumine illo derivantur, et ad illud lumen ordinantur.”

¹⁶ *In Eph* V, lectio IV: “Dicit ergo *eratis aliquando tenebrae*, id est excaecati ignorantia et errore.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: “Primo quantum ad substantiam, vel genus operis; secundo quantum ad modum, vel intentionem facientis.”

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas Graf, “Die Lehre des hl. Albertus Magnus über das psychologische Subjekt der Gnade und Tugenden,” *Divus Thomas* (Freiburg) 9 (1931), pp. 190-92. Quoted in Thomas F. O’Meara, “Virtues in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 58 (1997), p. 264.

Thomas also maintained a distinction between the virtue of a thing and the pre-existing nature in which it is grounded, a distinction which applies analogously in the realms of both nature and grace. At *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3, he compares the natural and infused virtues in order to show how they are to be distinguished from the nature that grounds them. In making this point he has recourse to the metaphor of light: thus, he tells us, “even as the natural light of reason is something besides the acquired virtues, which are ordained to this natural light, so also the light of grace which is a participation of the Divine Nature is something besides the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light.”¹⁹ It thus becomes apparent, as Dauphinais writes, that “Although St. Thomas distinguishes between grace and the virtues, he never separates them. Instead, they complement each other.”²⁰

The next article (a. 4), deals with the related question of whether grace is in the essence of the soul as in a subject or rather in one of its powers. If grace were the same as virtue, it would have the powers of the soul as its subject. Thomas has however already

¹⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3: “Sicut igitur lumen naturale rationis est aliquid praeter virtutes acquisitas, quae dicuntur in ordine ad ipsum lumen naturale; ita etiam ipsum lumen gratiae, quod est participatio divinae naturae, est aliquid praeter virtutes infusas, quae a lumine illo derivantur, et ad illud lumen ordinantur.” See also *De ver* q. 27 a. 2: “[E]st aliquis finis ad quem homo a Deo praeparatur, naturae humanae proportionem excedens, scilicet vita aeterna, quae consistit in visione Dei per essentiam, quae excedit proportionem cuiuslibet naturae creatae, soli Deo connaturalis existens. Unde oportet quod homini detur aliquid, non solum per quod operetur ad finem, vel per quod inclinetur eius appetitus in finem illum, sed per quod ipsa natura hominis elevetur ad quamdam dignitatem, secundum quam talis finis sit ei competens: et ad hoc datur *gratia*; ad inclinandum autem affectum in hunc finem datur *caritas*; ad exequendum autem opera quibus praedictus finis acquiritur, dantur *aliae virtutes*. Et ideo, sicut in rebus naturalibus est *aliud* natura ipsa quam inclinatio naturae, et eius motus vel operatio; ita et in gratuitis est aliud *gratia* a caritate, et a ceteris virtutibus.” See also *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3 ad 3: “Nec tamen est [gratia] idem quod virtus, sed habitudo quaedam quae praesupponitur virtutibus infusis, sicut earum principium et radix.”

²⁰ Dauphinais, “The Pedagogy of the Incarnation,” p. 230.

proved that grace differs from virtue. Logic therefore compels the conclusion that, since virtue has the powers of the soul as its proper subject, we must look elsewhere for the subject of grace.²¹ He has also just shown that grace is prior to virtue. It must consequently have a subject that is prior to the powers of the soul. He therefore concludes that the subject of grace is the essence of the soul. In the essence of his soul man participates by grace in the divine nature. Faith (whereby “man in his intellective power participates in the Divine knowledge”) and charity (whereby man “in his power of will participates in the Divine love”) have grace as their source and principle.²²

Grace cannot therefore be simply equated with faith or charity since these exert their transformative power in the potencies of the soul whereas grace itself is rooted in the very essence of the soul. As Rudi te Velde writes, “Grace not only enables man to act in a divine-like manner but it even informs his essential being; the human nature receives a likeness of the divine nature whereby he becomes ‘God by participation’ and is born again as ‘child of God’.”²³ Grace effects a radical change in the Christian, a change which causes him to be disposed in a new way. It should be borne in mind in this regard that Thomas’s treatment of grace is a continuation of his question on the divine missions. In other words, the divine missions effect an inner transformation in the believer, a transformation that is reflected in outward behaviour.

²¹ See *STh* I-II, q. 55 a. 1 and q. 56 a. 1.

²² *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 4: “[G]ratia, sicut est prius virtute, ita habeat subiectum prius potentiis animae, ita scilicet quod sit in essentia animae. Sicut enim per potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei; et secundum potentiam voluntatis amorem divinum, per virtutem caritatis; ita etiam per naturam animae participat, secundum quandam similitudinem, naturam divinam, per quandam regenerationem sive recreationem.”

²³ Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: The ‘Divine Science’ of the Summa Theologiae* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2006), p. 164.

In this regard Thomas argues that grace is an accidental form of the soul on the basis that it cannot be a substance or substantial form since it is above human nature. Only God can possess the form of God. A creature that possessed the divine form would have a divine nature – a glaring contradiction in terms. All created beings, including humans, are ontologically distinct from God and have their own proper substantial forms that establish them in their finite mode of being. Grace nevertheless establishes a certain likeness (*similitudo*) of the divine nature in the human soul. In terms inherited from Dionysius, the likeness of grace makes the soul participate in God’s very own being. Whatever is substantial in God becomes accidental in the soul which participates in the divine goodness. Grace as an accidental form is thus deemed “to belong to a being rather than to be a being.”²⁴ Like any other accident that comes into being or is corrupted insofar as “its subject begins or ceases to be in act with this accident,”²⁵ so too “grace is also said to be created inasmuch as men are created with reference to it, i.e., are given a new being out of nothing, i.e., not from merits.”²⁶ In this way we become, in the words of 2 Pet 1:4, “*partakers of the Divine Nature*” and can therefore be said “to be born again sons of God.”²⁷ One can in this sense speak of the divinization of the soul: the soul becomes like God (*deiformis*) on account of the new spiritual being that is conferred by grace. The image of God that the human being enjoys by virtue of his natural aptitude for knowing and loving God is perfected by the conformity of grace. The essence and powers of his soul are transformed so that he can know and love God supernaturally.

²⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 2 ad 3: “[M]agis dicitur esse entis quam ens.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*: “[S]ubiectum incipit vel desinit esse in actu secundum illud accidens.”

²⁶ *Ibid.*: “[G]ratia dicitur creari, ex eo quod omnes secundum ipsam creantur, idest in novo esse constituuntur, ex nihilo, idest non ex meritis.”

²⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 3: “[D]ivinae consortes naturae ... dicimur regenerari in filios Dei.”

To know and to love God supernaturally is to perceive and to desire the divine Good, which divine good transcends the good that is proportioned to unaided human nature, that is to say, grace enables the intellect to know God and the will to love God as its ultimate Beatitude. Indeed, for Thomas the primary motive for God's conferral of grace on the rational creature is not the restoration of human nature from the consequences of Original Sin. Grace would still have been necessary if the Fall had not occurred as it would not otherwise have been possible for man to attain his final end of union with God. Our first parents in the state of innocence were mere creatures and therefore not united to God by nature. The union of the rational creature with God in knowledge and love therefore requires the gracious action of God whereby the rational creature is raised beyond its condition as a creature to the level of the divine. The primary rationale for grace is therefore not Original Sin but final Beatitude. Grace, which is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, bestows on the Christian a participation in the life of the Holy Spirit. This participation, which divinizes the believer, makes possible final union with God in eternal Beatitude.

This interpretation is supported by Thomas's speculations at *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2, concerning the motive for the Incarnation. The first reason that Thomas offers in this regard does at first sight seem to contradict our position. Thomas distinguishes between two senses in which a thing can be considered to be necessary. According to one sense it is necessary because the end aimed at cannot be attained without it. The necessity of food for the preservation of human life illustrates this point. In another sense, the thing helps one to attain the end "better and more conveniently."²⁸ We are once again in the realm of fittingness arguments. Here Thomas offers the example of a horse being necessary for a journey just as for us a car is often deemed to be necessary for a long trip. While God could have restored

²⁸ *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2: "[M]elius et convenientius."

human nature in many ways and it was therefore not necessary for Him to become incarnate according to the first sense delineated, the Incarnation can be said to have been necessary according to the second sense. So if the Incarnation, along with the life of grace that it mediates to us, was necessary for the restoration of human nature, it might be objected in spite of what has been said above that the primary rationale for grace is in fact Original Sin and not final Beatitude.

As he begins to expound his second reason for the *motivum incarnationis*, however, Thomas remarks that this restoration of human nature “may be viewed with respect to our *furtherance in the good*.”²⁹ In other words, the restoration of human nature is not a good or an end in itself; it is rather ordered towards other ends which Thomas then goes on to enumerate: faith, hope, charity, and well-doing. Ultimately, as he indicates in the fifth reason that he gives, the restoration of human nature is ordered towards “full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life; and this is bestowed upon us by Christ's humanity.”³⁰ With respect to the Incarnation, therefore, eternal Beatitude can be regarded as the end to which restoration of human nature is ordered. It is an instance of the general principle enunciated elsewhere by Thomas, namely that “the end is called the cause of causes.”³¹ It is true that Thomas then proceeds to enunciate various motives for the Incarnation based on the idea of it being “useful for our *withdrawal from evil*.”³² It must be borne in mind however that withdrawal from evil is nothing other than furtherance in good and thus serves the attainment of eternal Beatitude.

²⁹ Ibid.: “[H]oc quidem considerari potest quantum ad promotionem hominis in bono.”

³⁰ Ibid.: “Quinto, quantum ad plenam participationem divinitatis, quae vere est hominis beatitudo, et finis humanae vitae. Et hoc collatum est nobis per Christi humanitatem.”

³¹ *STh* I, q. 5 a. 2 ad 1: “[D]icitur quod finis est causa causarum.” See also *In II Sent*, d. 9 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1.

³² *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2: “Similiter etiam hoc utile fuit ad remotionem mali.”

To summarize. Thomas's teaching concerning grace has its well-springs in Scripture. Of particular note in this regard is 2 Pet 1:4 and Eph 1:5 and 5:8, but his speculations have been nourished by deep reflection on a range of biblical texts on which he commented in the course of his career. His reflections in the *Summa* furnish an attempt to work out how human beings, having been conferred with a 'new nature' in Christ, are deified while respecting the infinite ontological distance that nevertheless still remains between God and human creatures. In unfolding his account Thomas argues that grace is distinct from the theological and the other infused virtues that flow from it. It is rooted in the essence of the soul, conferring on the soul a participation in the divine nature. Faith and charity, in contrast, perfect the powers of the soul: faith perfects the intellect by granting human beings a participation in the divine knowledge while charity perfects the will by bestowing on man a participation in the divine love. The presence of the divine Persons in the essence of the soul, which presence is the effect of the divine mission, transforms the soul and is associated with a different life. It is important to note that grace, by which the Persons of the Trinity are present in the essence of the soul, is an accidental form. Thus, while it establishes a certain likeness between the soul and God, the soul remains nonetheless ontologically distinct from God. At the same time grace enables the human person to know and to love God as his ultimate Beatitude, something that lies beyond the capacity of unaided human nature. As such, grace would have been necessary even before the Fall since our first parents were human beings and so could not be united to God by nature. The primary rationale for grace is Beatitude, not Original Sin.

Our understanding of Thomas's account of the transforming effects of grace will therefore be furthered by a consideration in the next section of his treatment of Beatitude and the relationship of Beatitude to grace. The notion of Beatitude is of course intimately connected with that of participation since man's journey towards the Trinitarian God as his ultimate Beatitude entails an ever greater participation in the inner life of the Trinity. The

pursuit of God as one's final End, an end that transcends all finite ends constituted by created goods, requires a particular set of virtues, namely the theological virtues. As will become apparent, the notion that there are virtues that have God as their end entails a transformation of an Aristotelian understanding of virtue. Consequently, as Rikhof explains, Thomas in effect employs the concept 'virtue' analogically with "the concept virtue primarily embodied in the theological virtues."³³ The theological virtues are as it were the seeds of the other infused virtues which in turn differ from their acquired counterparts in that they are given a different analogical instantiation by being taken up into the life of grace. Finally, the Gifts of the Holy Spirit – necessary in order to dispose one to be more readily moved by God by proportioning the 'moved' believer' to the divine 'mover' – exercise a transformative power on human knowing and willing.

2. The transformative effects of grace

At the outset of this section, it is appropriate to outline Thomas's teaching concerning Beatitude, which teaching is to be found in the first five questions of the *Prima Pars Secundae*. In effect, this teaching translates the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* into a Christian key. Like Aristotle, Thomas dismisses various erroneous conceptions of what conduces towards human happiness (*beatitudo*) in the course of reasoning towards what constitutes man's true end and ultimate fulfillment. Wealth, honours, fame or glory, power, bodily goods, pleasure, and goods of the soul are found to be wanting with regard to their ability to deliver ultimate happiness to man. Indeed, concludes Thomas, no created good whatsoever can constitute man's happiness, the reason being that "happiness is the perfect

³³ Rikhof, "Theological Virtues and the Role of the Spirit," p. 16.

good, which lulls the appetite altogether; else it would not be the last end, if something yet remained to be desired.”³⁴

It becomes clear, when Thomas introduces the objects of intellect and will into his discussion of Beatitude, that man’s ultimate happiness cannot be dissociated from the perfection of man as the image of God on account of his capacity to know and to love God. Man’s ultimate happiness must consist in the fulfillment of his highest faculties, whose objects are the universal true and the universal good respectively. The universal true or first truth (*primum verum*) and the universal good or highest good (*summum bonum*) is of course none other than God. Thus, writes Thomas, “God alone can satisfy the will of man”³⁵ and the intellect can achieve its perfection only “through union with God as with that object, in which alone man’s happiness consists.”³⁶ Characterizing the negative dialectic by which Thomas reaches this conclusion, Jean-Pierre Torrell writes: “More than once, this ascending negation makes us think of St. John of the Cross or the Desert Fathers. It is the law of renunciation and of the most complete emptying of self for the sake of the only good.”³⁷

A difficulty arises however when we consider that what man can know naturally must necessarily be in keeping with his mode of being as a created substance. Final Beatitude lies beyond the powers of unaided human nature to attain: “The beatific vision and knowledge are to some extent above the nature of the rational soul, inasmuch as it cannot *reach* it of its own

³⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 2 a. 8: “Beatitudo enim est bonum perfectum, quod totaliter quietat appetitum, alioquin non esset ultimus finis, si adhuc restaret aliquid appetendum.”

³⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 2 a. 8: “[S]olus Deus voluntatem hominis implere potest.”

³⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 3 a. 8: “[P]erfectionem suam habebit per unionem ad Deum sicut ad obiectum, in quo solo beatitudo hominis consistit.”

³⁷ Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Bernhard Blankenhorn, O.P. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), p. 188.

strength.”³⁸ As Thomas explains, the natural knowledge of every creature is according to the mode of its substance and “every knowledge that is according to the mode of created substance, falls short of the vision of the Divine Essence, which infinitely surpasses all created substance.”³⁹ Rectitude of will is also necessary for the attainment of final Beatitude since “it is nothing else than the right order of the will to the last end.”⁴⁰ The will however has a natural inclination simply to that good which is proportioned to its own nature.⁴¹ (This good must of course be presented to the will as its object by the intellect.) It follows therefore that human beings cannot attain final Beatitude by virtue of their own natural powers since

³⁸ *STh* III, q. 9 a. 2 ad 3: “[V]isio seu scientia beata est quodammodo supra naturam animae rationalis, inquantum scilicet propria virtute ad eam pervenire non potest.” In another way, however, “it is in accordance with its nature, inasmuch as it is capable of it by nature, having been made to the likeness of God” (“est secundum naturam ipsius, inquantum scilicet per naturam suam est capax eius, prout scilicet ad imaginem Dei facta est”). Nevertheless, the divine, uncreated, knowledge “is in every way above the nature of the soul” (“est omnibus modis supra naturam animae humanae”).

³⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 5 a. 5: “Omnis autem cognitio quae est secundum modum substantiae creatae, deficit a visione divinae essentiae, quae in infinitum excedit omnem substantiam creatam.”

⁴⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 5 a. 7: “[R]ectitudo voluntatis ... requiritur ad beatitudinem, cum nihil aliud sit quam debitus ordo voluntatis ad ultimum finem.” See also *STh* I-II, q. 4 a. 4: “[R]ectitudo voluntatis requiritur ad beatitudinem et antecedenter et concomitanter. Antecedenter quidem, quia rectitudo voluntatis est per debitum ordinem ad finem ultimum. Finis autem comparatur ad id quod ordinatur ad finem, sicut forma ad materiam. Unde sicut materia non potest consequi formam, nisi sit debito modo disposita ad ipsam, ita nihil consequitur finem, nisi sit debito modo ordinatum ad ipsum. Et ideo nullus potest ad beatitudinem pervenire, nisi habeat rectitudinem voluntatis. Concomitanter autem, quia ... beatitudo ultima consistit in visione divinae essentiae, quae est ipsa essentia bonitatis. Et ita voluntas videntis Dei essentiam, ex necessitate amat quicquid amat, sub ordine ad Deum; sicut voluntas non videntis Dei essentiam, ex necessitate amat quicquid amat, sub communi ratione boni quam novit. Et hoc ipsum est quod facit voluntatem rectam. Unde manifestum est quod beatitudo non potest esse sine recta voluntate.”

⁴¹ See *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 1; and, *De virt* a. 5.

these powers are ordered simply towards the attainment of goods that are proportioned to human nature. As Healy expresses the point, “All our efforts to live as Christians are quite useless unless God acts within us to enable us to do what we otherwise cannot do.”⁴² God’s freely-given assistance is necessary for, as Thomas writes, since “man, by his natural endowments, cannot produce meritorious works proportionate to everlasting life”⁴³ he needs a higher force, namely grace. Elsewhere he argues that “because a thing is ordered to its end by some activity, and those things which are for the sake of the end must be proportioned to the end, it is necessary that there should be some perfections of man whereby he is ordered to the supernatural end which exceeds the capacity of man’s natural principles.”⁴⁴ In brief, since man is incapable of directing himself by virtue of his natural powers to God as his final Beatitude, God must grant man His supernatural assistance in order that he be enabled to achieve this end.

Man’s ultimate happiness consists in the perfection of the faculties of intellect and will, that is to say, in the perfection of those faculties whereby he is made to the image of God. Since the objects of intellect and will are the universal true and the universal good respectively, it follows that only God can fulfil the human desire for happiness. The problem however is that ultimate Beatitude lies beyond the powers of unaided human nature to attain. Whatever we can know and will naturally must be proportioned to our mode of being as finite created substances while God’s essence infinitely surpasses that of all created substances.

⁴² Healy, *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 107.

⁴³ *STh* I-II, q. 109 a. 5: “[H]omo per sua naturalia non potest producere opera meritoria proportionata vitae aeternae.”

⁴⁴ *De virt* a. 10: “[Q]uia unumquodque ordinatur ad finem per operationem aliquam; et ea quae sunt ad finem, oportet esse aliquantulum fini proportionata; necessarium est esse aliquas hominis perfectiones quibus ordinetur ad finem supernaturalem, quae excedant facultatem principiorum naturalium hominis.”

Man cannot therefore know or love God by virtue of his unaided powers. The divine assistance in the form of grace and of the theological virtues is required.

Grace and the theological virtues constitute the supernatural principles whereby we are ordered to final Beatitude. We have already discussed grace as a participation in God's very own life as well as the relationship between grace and the theological virtues. In the next section we will consider faith, hope, and charity – the theological virtues that proportion us to our final End. As we will see, there is a certain order of acquisition among these virtues. In this work we will concentrate on the theological virtues of faith and charity. In this regard it is to be noted that since grace perfects nature, we can already speak of the hermeneutical significance of faith and charity since they perfect the intellect and will respectively along with the dynamics of interinvolvement that characterize their relationship. In what follows we intend to give only a summary sketch of Thomas's teaching. This summary sketch will serve as a prelude to a more detailed treatment of Thomas's teaching in subsequent chapters.

2.1 The theological and other infused virtues

The divine assistance for human beings is by way of supernatural principles of action that God infuses in us over and above the natural principles. The natural principles of operation are those discussed in chapter three, that is to say, "the essence of the soul and its powers, namely, intellect and will, which are the principles of man's activity as such."⁴⁵ The supernatural principles that are infused in order that the soul be ordered to final Beatitude are firstly grace, "by which the soul has a kind of spiritual existence,"⁴⁶ and then faith, hope and charity. To say that the grace imparts a kind of spiritual existence to the soul is to say that by

⁴⁵ Ibid.: "Naturalia autem operationum principia sunt essentia animae, et potentiae eius, scilicet intellectus et voluntas, quae sunt principia operationum hominis, in quantum huiusmodi."

⁴⁶ Ibid.: "[P]er quam habet anima quoddam spirituale esse."

grace the soul participates in the divine nature. As the last chapter emphasized, participation in the divine nature is possible only by virtue of the visible mission of the second Person of the Holy Trinity.⁴⁷

Faith, hope and charity are known as the theological virtues. At *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 1, Thomas offers three reasons as to why they are known as such: firstly, because they have God as their object; secondly, because they are infused by God; and, thirdly, because they are made known to us by divine revelation.⁴⁸ The *sed contra* is more precise with regard to divine revelation, citing from the Old Testament: “[I]t is written (*Ecclus.* ii.8, seqq.): *Ye that fear the Lord believe Him*, and again, *hope in Him*, and again, *love Him*,”⁴⁹ and concluding on the basis of this quotation that faith, hope and charity are virtues that direct us to God and that they are therefore theological.⁵⁰ Another *sed contra* in an article dealing with the question of whether faith, hope and charity are suitably considered as theological virtues quotes the authority of St. Paul: “The Apostle says (1 Cor. xiii. 13): *Now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three.*”⁵¹ The *sed contra* of the final article of Thomas’s treatment of the theological virtues at *STh* I-II, q. 62 – which article deals with the relative ordering of faith, hope and charity – employs a foreshortened form of this citation from St. Paul: “*Now there*

⁴⁷ See *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8.

⁴⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 1: “[H]uiusmodi principia virtutes dicuntur theologicae, tum quia habent Deum pro obiecto, inquantum per eas recte ordinamur in Deum; tum quia a solo Deo nobis infunduntur; tum quia sola divina revelatione, in sacra Scriptura, huiusmodi virtutes traduntur.”

⁴⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 1 *sed contra*: “[D]icitur enim *Eccli.* II, qui timetis Deum, credite illi; item, sperate in illum; item, diligite illum.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: “Ergo fides, spes et caritas sunt virtutes in Deum ordinantes. Sunt ergo theologicae.”

⁵¹ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3 *sed contra*: “[A]postolus dicit, I ad Cor. XIII, *nunc autem manent fides, spes, caritas, tria haec.*”

remain faith, hope, charity.”⁵² Reginald of Piperno’s *reportatio* on 1 Cor 13:13 does not elaborate any further than does Thomas in this question in the *Summa*. It in effect simply reiterates what we have already noted: “[O]nly those three, namely, faith, hope and charity, are called theological virtues, because they have God for their immediate object.”⁵³

The main body of *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3, cites 1 Cor 2:9, which says that “*The eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.*”⁵⁴ In his commentary on the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Thomas explains that the glorious vision of God is unknown to human reason in two ways. Firstly, it lies beyond the range of the sense on which all human knowledge depends. St. Paul mentions two senses in particular, namely sight and hearing, in order to illustrate this point: “[T]he eye cannot see God’s glory because it is not “something colored and visible”⁵⁵ and the ear has not heard God’s glory because “it is not a sound or an audible word.”⁵⁶ Secondly, intellectual discovery of God’s glory is excluded when St. Paul says: “[N]or the heart of man conceived.”⁵⁷ In brief, God’s glory “is not only not known by the senses, but not even by the heart, of a carnal man.”⁵⁸ Familiarity with Thomas’s commentary on 1 Cor 2:9 allows one to appreciate more readily the biblically inspired nature of his

⁵² *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 4 *sed contra*: “Sed contra est ordo quo apostolus ista enumerat, dicens, *nunc autem manent fides, spes, caritas.*”

⁵³ *Ad 1 Cor XIII*, lectio IV [805]: “Unde et solum ista tria, scilicet fides, spes et charitas, dicuntur virtutes theologicae, quia habent immediate Deum pro obiecto.”

⁵⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3: “[S]ecundum illud I ad Cor. II, *oculus non vidit, et auris non audivit, et in cor hominis non ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se.*”

⁵⁵ *Ad 1 Cor II*, lectio II [96]: “[N]on est aliquid coloratum et visibile.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: “[N]on est sonus aut vox sensibilis.”

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: “[N]eque in cor hominis ascendit.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: “Est ergo sensus quod illa gloria non solum sensu non percipitur, sed nec corde hominis carnalis.”

reasoning at *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3, reasoning that leads to the conclusion that in respect both of the intellect and of the will supernatural principles are required to direct us to our supernatural end.

By faith the intellect “receives certain supernatural principles, which are held by means of a Divine light.”⁵⁹ It knows certain things supernaturally, which things “are in this [supernatural] order as principles naturally known in the order of connatural activities.”⁶⁰ Just as a whole array of conclusions presuppose naturally known first principles – principles such as ‘a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect’ – so too do those things which the intellect knows supernaturally, that is to say, the articles of faith, lie at the basis of the conclusions reached by graced reason. Hope and charity impart to the will a certain inclination to the supernatural good of final Beatitude, which Beatitude the will cannot attain by its natural inclination. As Thomas explains elsewhere, effects are necessarily proportionate to their causes and principles. Thus, the natural virtues are capable of directing us towards our natural end but not beyond it. He continues: “Now all virtues, intellectual and moral, that are acquired by our actions, arise from certain natural principles pre-existing in us ...: instead of which natural principles, God bestows on us the theological virtues, whereby we are directed to a supernatural end.”⁶¹ In this statement Thomas groups all the theological virtues together as directing us to our supernatural end and does not simply focus on hope and

⁵⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3: “[Q]uantum ad intellectum, adduntur homini quaedam principia supernaturalia, quae divino lumine capiuntur, et haec sunt credibilia, de quibus est fides.”

⁶⁰ *De virt* a. 10: “[S]e habent in isto ordine sicut principia naturaliter cognita in ordine connaturalium operationum.”

⁶¹ *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 3: “Omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales quam morales, quae ex nostris actibus acquiruntur, procedunt ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praeexistentibus ... Loco quorum naturalium principiorum, conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theologicae, quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem.”

charity as inclining us to this end. It is possible to talk about the theological virtues, including faith, as directing us to ultimate Beatitude because faith itself shows hope and charity their objects. Hope and charity require their object to be presented to them by faith in order to direct us to final Beatitude. By the same token, unformed faith could not direct one to final union with God.

In accordance with his conviction that we cannot will any object unless the intellect first apprehends it, Thomas argues that faith must precede hope and charity in the order of acquisition, as already intimated. His treatment of the theological virtues follows this order. Faith strengthens the intellect, being the divine light by which God illumines the intellect so that it can receive those supernatural principles which are the articles of faith. Since there are two theological virtues that perfect the will, namely hope and charity, Thomas must distinguish them from each other and show how each perfects the will in its own way. Hope, he maintains, perfects the will in so far as the will is directed by the movement of intention toward the supernatural end as something attainable. Charity perfects the will by effecting a certain spiritual union, whereby the will is transformed as it were into the supernatural end. Hope and charity in effect render the will connatural to the end towards which it tends.⁶² Thomas explains succinctly, as follows, why there are two theological virtues perfecting the will: “Two things pertain to the appetite, viz., movement to the end, and conformity with the end by means of love. Hence there must needs be two theological virtues in the human appetite, namely hope and charity.”⁶³

The final four chapters of this book will concentrate on the theological virtues of faith and charity. These two virtues that strengthen the intellect and will respectively are

⁶² *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3.

⁶³ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3 ad 3: “[A]d appetitum duo pertinent, scilicet motus in finem; et conformatio ad finem per amorem. Et sic oportet quod in appetitu humano duae virtutes theologicae ponantur, scilicet spes et caritas.”

characterized by a relationship of interinvolvement for charity's object is presented to it by faith while living faith (*fides formata*) must be informed by charity. As will become evident in the final four chapters, the dynamics operative at the level of the natural workings of intellect and will and their interaction with each other continue to be significant in the context of grace. Faith therefore has a fundamental bearing on what we deem to be morally good and bad while charity influences the unfolding of reason from its very wellsprings. The perfection of the image of God by the divine missions, that is to say, by grace as expressed in the life of faith and charity, therefore possesses a profound hermeneutical significance, that is to say, it conditions the believer's perception of reality and, based on this perception, the unfolding of his reason.

While the theological virtues direct us immediately and sufficiently to our supernatural end, Thomas maintains however that the soul "needs further to be perfected by other infused virtues in regard to other things, yet in relation to God."⁶⁴ (The "other infused virtues" are in fact the cardinal virtues, namely prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance as the *sed contra* to *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 3 makes clear.)⁶⁵ This position illustrates just how radical is the transformation wrought by grace in the believer: it penetrates to the very source of one's moral character. As Servais Pinckaers expresses this point, "The first source of moral excellence is no longer located in the human person, but in God through Christ."⁶⁶ In contrast to natural virtue, whose mean is fixed by natural reason, the mean of infused virtue is

⁶⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 3 ad 2: "[O]portet quod per alias virtutes infusas perficiatur anima circa alias res, in ordine tamen ad Deum." My translation.

⁶⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 63 a. 3 *sed contra*: "[D]icitur Sap. VIII, *sobrietatem et iustitiam docet, prudentiam et virtutem*."

⁶⁶ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Morality: The Catholic View*, trans. Michael Sherwin, O.P. (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2003), p. 71.

established by the divine rule.⁶⁷ The next subsection will give an example of how the infused virtues differ from their acquired counterparts.

The relationship between the theological virtues and the other infused virtues, that is to say, the infused cardinal virtues, corresponds to that obtaining between the natural principles of virtue, on the one hand, and the moral and intellectual virtues, on the other hand. Indeed, reference to Thomas's comments concerning whether virtue is in us by infusion clarifies his assertion that the theological virtues direct us to God by a certain inchoation (*secundum quandam inchoationem*).⁶⁸ There are two ways in which virtue is said to be natural to man *secundum quandam inchoationem*. Concerning the first way, which is relevant to the present considerations, Thomas tells us that with regard to his specific nature man's reason is inscribed with "certain naturally known principles of both knowledge and action, which are the nurseries of intellectual and moral virtues,"⁶⁹ and his will is endowed with "a natural appetite for good in accordance with reason."⁷⁰ Just as the naturally known principles of knowledge and action are called the seeds of virtue, perhaps the theological virtues could be described as the seeds of the other infused virtues. These infused cardinal virtues direct the activity of intellect and will towards the ultimate fulfilment of final Beatitude because they are 'normed' by the divine rule by means of the theological virtues.

Starting from the witness of Scripture, Thomas shows how grace and the theological virtues proportion and direct man to his ultimate end, namely Beatitude. In this regard faith

⁶⁷ See *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 3 ad 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid.: "[V]irtutes theologicae sufficienter nos ordinant in finem supernaturalem, secundum quandam inchoationem, quantum scilicet ad ipsum Deum immediate."

⁶⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 1: "[I]n ratione homini insunt naturaliter quaedam principia naturaliter cognita tam scibilium quam agendorum, quae sunt quaedam seminalia intellectualium virtutum et moralium."

⁷⁰ Ibid.: "[I]nest quidam naturalis appetitus boni quod est secundum rationem."

strengthens the intellect in order that it can receive those supernatural principles which are the articles of faith. Two theological virtues, namely hope and charity, are required to perfect the will in order to move it towards its end and in order to conform it to this end by means of love. The theological virtues are related immediately to God as our final End. Hence also the need for other infused virtues, which relate to other things albeit with regard to God. The theological virtues are in effect the seeds of the infused cardinal virtues. The fact that the theological virtues have God as their final End means moreover that the Aristotelian concept of virtue must undergo a radical change, a change that is predicated upon the fact that God is not one end among many other ends but rather constitutes the End towards which all true goods conduce. God's transcendence is decisive in this regard.

The foregoing discussion of infused virtues, theological and cardinal, raises among other things the question as to how precisely principles that direct us to a supernatural end can qualify as virtues. Thomas in effect transforms the Aristotelian notion of virtue in the light of revealed data. The transformation that the notion of the Trinitarian God imports into the concept of 'virtue' will be touched upon in the next section.

2.2 The transformation of the notion of virtue

Thomas's treatment of the theological virtues effects a transformation in the Aristotelian concept of virtue. Thomas's use of the concept is analogical and the theological virtues furnish the primary analogate, that is to say, the concept of virtue is primarily instantiated in the theological virtues. Rikhof elaborates as follows:

As with other analogical concepts, one specific instance contains the central *ratio* (*simpliciter*) while in other instances the *ratio* is related to that central *ratio*

(*secundum quid*). The term ‘virtue’ is used *simpliciter* when used for the *virtutes infusae*; it is used *secundum quid* when it is used for the acquired virtues.⁷¹

The analogical nature of virtue is predicated on two central claims that Thomas makes about the differences between the infused and acquired virtues. Firstly, they are ruled by different ‘rules’ or ‘standards’; secondly, the infused virtues proportion the Christian to ultimate Beatitude in a way that exceeds the capacity of the acquired virtues.⁷² In other words, there are structural differences between these two sets of virtues.⁷³ *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 4 is instructive in this regard. In this text Thomas tells us that “the mean appointed in ... concupiscences according to the rule of human reason, is seen under a different aspect from the mean which is fixed according to the Divine rule.”⁷⁴ In other words, acquired temperance differs from infused temperance. Thus, natural reason demands that the food we consume not harm our bodily health nor adversely affect the use of reason. According to the divine rule, however, a man abstains from food and drink and other sense pleasures in order to “*chastise his body, and bring it into subjection.*”⁷⁵ To state the obvious, the Christian conception of fasting goes beyond the confines established by natural reason. In a like manner, “those infused moral

⁷¹ Rikhof, “Theological Virtues,” p. 16.

⁷² For an elaboration of this point, see Angela McKay Knobel, “Can Aquinas’s Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life?” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 (2010), 382-385.

⁷³ Other structural differences between infused and acquired virtues include the way they are acquired and destroyed and, most importantly, the kind of ability that they confer. For a discussion of these points see Angela Knobel, “The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas’ Moral Philosophy” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004), pp. 64-8.

⁷⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 63 a. 4: “Manifestum est autem quod alterius rationis est modus qui imponitur in huiusmodi concupiscentiis secundum regulam rationis humanae, et secundum regulam divinam.”

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: “[R]equiritur quod homo castiget corpus suum, et in servitutem redigat.” The allusion is to 1 Cor 9:27.

virtues, whereby men behave well in respect of their being *fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God* (Eph. ii. 19) differ from the acquired virtues, whereby man behaves well in respect of human affairs.”⁷⁶ As Knobel comments with regard to the difference between the infused and the acquired virtues in general, “In acts of infused virtue, there is something about the very action itself that is proportionate to, or befitting, the act of an adopted son of God; something which cannot be present in the actions of one who is not a participant in the divine life. The act itself is of a quality befitting an adopted son of God.”⁷⁷

Porter’s comments concerning the transforming effect of charity on our conception and administration of legal justice offer a concrete illustration of what Thomas arguably has in mind here: “[I]f we believe that forgiveness is one of the exterior acts required by charity, we may find ourselves committed in principle to forgo certain forms of retributive punishment that would otherwise seem to be permitted, perhaps even required, by the demands of justice.”⁷⁸ She goes on to argue that

on almost any showing the other-regarding obligations of charity are universal in scope, and they imply the equal value of each person, at least in some respects (cf. II-II, 26.5, 6). If this is so, then it implies that we must specify the domain of justice in such a way as to include all persons, and to regard them all as equally valuable in

⁷⁶ Ibid.: “differunt specie virtutes morales infusae, per quas homines bene se habent in ordine ad hoc quod sint cives sanctorum et domestici Dei; et aliae virtutes acquisitae, secundum quas homo se bene habet in ordine ad res humanas.”

⁷⁷ Knobel, “The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas’ Moral Philosophy,” p. 63. See also Dauphinais, “The Pedagogy of the Incarnation,” pp. 231-32.

⁷⁸ Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambriedge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans), p. 393.

some fundamental respects – judgments we would not otherwise be compelled to make, rationally or on broader natural considerations.⁷⁹

There can be no such thing as a purely secular reason for one who has faith, a point that receives theoretical support from Thomas's theological construal of virtue. No matter how one construes the relationship between the acquired and infused virtues in the Christian, the infused virtues necessarily reconfigure one's perception of moral reality.⁸⁰

Thomas's transformation of the Aristotelian concept of virtue in the light of his theological commitments is necessitated by the fact that God is not one end among other ends; He is not a particular good among other goods. If that were the case, the acquired moral and intellectual virtues would suffice to attain Him. God however transcends His creation and it is this fact that is decisive in Thomas's treatment of virtue. As we have seen, God alone can bridge the infinite chasm that separates us from His infinite Being by coming to us in grace, that is to say, by sending His Spirit to dwell in our hearts. This indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us is created charity⁸¹ and charity is a virtue since "the nature of virtue consists in attaining God"⁸² and "charity attains God, it unites us to God."⁸³

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ For a good account of two different ways of construing the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues, see Angela McKay Knobel, "Two Theories of Christian Virtue," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010), pp. 599-618. For a succinct yet very lucid discussion of the relationship between acquired and infused moral virtues, see Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina Van Dyke, *Aquinas's Ethics: Metaphysical Foundations, Moral Theory, and Theological Context* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), pp. 143-47.

⁸¹ See *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2.

⁸² *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 3: "[A]ttingere Deum constituit rationem virtutis."

⁸³ Ibid.: "[C]aritas attingit Deum, quia coniungit nos Deo."

In brief, the Aristotelian notion of virtue undergoes a transformation when it is adopted into a theological context. Indeed, the theological virtues embody the primary analogate of virtue. These virtues moreover inform the other virtues, intellectual and moral, thereby transforming them in concept and content. Justice is a case in point: forgiveness, which lies at the heart of the Christian life, rules out various forms of retributive justice. This transformation of the Aristotelian concept of virtue owes itself to the fact that God does not constitute one end among other possible ends. God's transcendence is decisive in Thomas's treatment of virtue for God alone can bridge the chasm between His infinite Being and our created finite being. He does so by sending His Holy Spirit into our hearts.

To talk about the transformation of virtue is therefore to talk about the transforming effects of the infusion of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. In other words, this transformation is a consequence of the mission of the Holy Spirit Who now inspires and possesses our virtues although they nonetheless "remain something deeply personal within us."⁸⁴ It is precisely this experience of our virtues being possessed and inspired by the Holy Spirit and yet being freely expressed by us that leads Thomas to elaborate an account of the Gifts.⁸⁵ In so doing, in the estimation of Pinckaers, he reaches "the apex of his theological reflexion and of his effort to account for the best of Christian experience, in the light of Scripture and tradition."⁸⁶ As we will see, the Gifts elevate the operation of the intellect and will by rendering them more amenable to divine inspiration. The more intellect and will are disposed to be moved by the

⁸⁴ Pinckaers, *Morality: The Catholic View*, p. 88.

⁸⁵ See *ibid.*

⁸⁶ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., "Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit: Aquinas's Doctrine of *Instinctus*," in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, ed. John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), p. 388.

Holy Spirit the more they work in conjunction with Him, albeit in a way that increases rather than diminishes human freedom.

2.3 *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*

Thomas's discussion of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit at *STh* I-II, q. 68 as also his discussions of the Beatitudes and Fruits of the Holy Spirit follow the questions devoted to virtue. In the introduction to *STh* I-II, q. 55, he indicates a connection between virtues, on the one hand, and these profoundly biblical themes, on the other hand: "[S]ince habits ... are divided into good and bad, we must speak in the first place of good habits, which are virtues, and of other matters connected with them, namely the Gifts, Beatitudes and Fruits."⁸⁷ This fact along with Thomas's stated desire to present the various themes of theology "according to the order of the subject-matter"⁸⁸ suggest that the question on the Gifts, Beatitudes and Fruits are closely related to the previous discussions about the virtues. As Rikhof writes:

[I]f one assumes that Thomas here as elsewhere in the *Summa Theologiae* structures his analyses and arguments towards a goal, these three are also the end or purpose of his discussions of the virtues. So, the place of these discussions of biblical themes that belong to the core of the Christian life show the profound biblical inspiration of Thomas' theology.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 55, prol.: "[Q]uia habitus ... distinguuntur per bonum et malum, primo dicendum est de habitibus bonis, qui sunt virtutes et alia eis adiuncta, scilicet dona, beatitudines et fructus."

⁸⁸ *STh* I, prol.: "[S]ecundum ordinem disciplinae."

⁸⁹ Rikhof, "Theological Virtues," pp. 21-22.

The first article of the question on the Gifts is concerned with terminological clarification. To be precise: how does the notion of Gift differ from that of virtue? The notion of ‘virtue’ communicates the notion that “it perfects man in relation to well-doing,”⁹⁰ while that of ‘gift’ “refers to the cause from which it proceeds.”⁹¹ Further reflection however reveals that these two notions are not mutually exclusive because nothing prevents something that proceeds from another source from perfecting someone in well-doing. It seems therefore that ‘virtue’ and ‘gift’ are not conceptually differentiated terms. This conclusion, based on the absence of opposition, is then supported by a further reason which, since it is not logically necessary, adds considerable weight to the position that Thomas is enunciating, all the more so since it is introduced by ‘especially’ (*praesertim*): “[E]specially ... that some virtues are infused into us by God.”⁹² Thus, in so far as some virtues and the Gifts are infused, they cannot be differentiated.

The argument thus far however exhibits one major defect for a theologian who is bound by the witness of Scripture: it cannot account for the biblical data. The biblical list of Gifts includes ‘fear’ (*timor*) which is not counted as a virtue.⁹³ And for Thomas, the biblical word is decisive: “[I]n order to differentiate the gifts from the virtues, we must be guided by the way in which Scripture expresses itself.”⁹⁴ Scripture itself in fact employs the term ‘spirit’ instead of ‘gift’: “For thus it is written (Isa. xi. 2, 3): *The spirit . . . of wisdom and of*

⁹⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1: “[P]erficit hominem ad bene agendum.”

⁹¹ *Ibid.*: “[R]atio autem doni sumitur secundum comparationem ad causam a qua est.”

⁹² *Ibid.*: “[P]raesertim ... quod virtutes quaedam nobis sunt infusae a Deo.”

⁹³ *Ibid.*: “Sed eis remanet non minor difficultas, ut scilicet rationem assignent quare quaedam virtutes dicantur dona, et non omnes; et quare aliqua computantur inter dona, quae non computantur inter virtutes, ut patet de timore.”

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*: “[A]d distinguendum dona a virtutibus, debemus sequi modum loquendi Scripturae.”

understanding . . . shall rest upon him, etc.”⁹⁵ Thomas argues that this formulation implies that the seven gifts are in us “by Divine inspiration.”⁹⁶ They are bestowed upon us by God who is for us an extrinsic principle of movement.⁹⁷ In effect they dispose us to be moved by God for, since whatever is moved must be proportionate to its mover, the perfection of whatever can be moved consists in “a disposition whereby it is disposed to be well moved by its mover.”⁹⁸ It follows that the more exalted the mover, the more perfect must be the disposition whereby the mobile is proportioned to its mover. Thus, for example, the more exalted the teaching imparted by a teacher, the more perfect the disposition required on the part of the student in order to receive this teaching. We therefore need higher perfections in order to be disposed to be moved by God. Pointing back to his initial discussion of the absence of opposition between ‘virtue’ and ‘gift’ (“there is no reason why that which proceeds from one as a gift should not perfect another in well-being”),⁹⁹ Thomas argues that these higher perfections are known as Gifts not only because they are infused by God but also because by them we are disposed to become docile to divine inspiration. This argument is based on Is 1:5, where we read: “*The Lord ... hath opened my ear, and I do not resist; I have not gone back.*”¹⁰⁰

Pinckaers expresses well Thomas’s teaching on the Gifts. There is what Pinckaers describes as a “unique conjunction between God’s action and ours.” He approvingly quotes

⁹⁵ Ibid.: “[D]icitur Isaiae XI, *requiescet super eum spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, et cetera.*”

⁹⁶ Ibid.: “Ex quibus verbis manifeste datur intelligi quod ista septem enumerantur ibi, secundum quod sunt in nobis ab inspiratione divina.”

⁹⁷ See *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 4.

⁹⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1: “[H]aec est perfectio mobilis inquantum est mobile, dispositio qua disponitur ad hoc quod bene moveatur a suo motore.”

⁹⁹ Ibid.: “Nihil autem prohibet illud quod est ab alio ut donum, esse perfectivum alicuius ad bene operandum”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.: “[D]icitur Isaiae I, *dominus aperuit mihi aurem; ego autem non contradico, retrorsum non abii.*”

J.H. Walgrave in this regard: “The more perfect the work of the Holy Spirit (namely the inspiration), the more it is interiorized and the more our will and the Holy Spirit work together (with our virtues), as if they formed a common principle.”¹⁰¹ The action of the Spirit in moving us does not however violate our freedom; rather, it exalts it. In his commentary on St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, Thomas tells us that although

the spiritual person is not as it were primarily inclined to do something by the movement of his own will but is rather inclined by the instinct of the Holy Spirit ... this does not prevent spiritual people from acting by their own wills and *liberum arbitrium* because the Holy Spirit causes this very movement of the will and of *liberum arbitrium* in them, as stated in Phil. 2, 13: “It is God Who works in us both to will and to do.”¹⁰²

As Mary Ann Fatula expresses the point, “the more receptive we are to the Holy Spirit, the more actualized we become in our own freedom and identity, and the more our actions are truly our own.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Pinckaers, “Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit,” p. 389. The quotation is from J.H. Walgrave, “*Instinctus Spiritus Sancti*. Een proeve tot Thomas-interpretatie,” *Ephemerides Theologiae Lovanienses* 5 (1969): 417-31.

¹⁰² *Ad Rom VIII*, lectio 3 [635]: “Similiter autem homo spiritualis non quasi ex motu propriae voluntatis principaliter sed ex instinctu spiritus sancti inclinatur ad aliquid agendum. ... Non tamen per hoc excluditur quin viri spirituales per voluntatem et liberum arbitrium operentur, quia ipsum motum voluntatis et liberi arbitrii spiritus sanctus in eis causat, secundum illud Phil. II, 13: *Deus est qui operatur in nobis velle et perficere*.”

¹⁰³ Mary Ann Fatula, *Thomas Aquinas Preacher and Friend* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), p. 230.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are habits that perfect the intellect and will by rendering them amenable to the divine inspiration which bestows upon them a correspondingly more exalted mode of operation. In the words of Rziha, “through the gifts of the Holy Spirit humans are able to participate in this divine knowledge and power in the highest possible mode.”¹⁰⁴ In elaborating this point, Thomas quotes from Aristotle’s *Eudemian Ethics*: “[F]or those who are moved by Divine instinct, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their [the gifts] inner promptings, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason.”¹⁰⁵ It seems reasonable to claim that this quotation is more at home in Thomas’s theological context than in the realm of Aristotelian this-worldly *eudaimonia* where human reason ought to be the rule. At any rate, the Gifts are to be understood as having something over and above the other virtues since they perfect man in so far as he is moved by God.¹⁰⁶ In this way, for example, wisdom as a Gift is to be distinguished from wisdom as an intellectual virtue: “Wisdom is called an intellectual virtue, so far as it proceeds from the judgment of reason: but it is called a Gift, according as its work proceeds from the Divine prompting.”¹⁰⁷ As O’Meara explains: “An easy and prompt response to divine inspiration, a meeting between the divine and the human at an instinctual level, the gift is a less deliberative mode of living. Here the struggle of virtue has reached what Aquinas named a “connatural” contact with the realm of God.”¹⁰⁸ Again, as Matthew

¹⁰⁴ John, Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions: Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), p. 182.

¹⁰⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1: “[H]is qui moventur per instinctum divinum, non expedit consiliari secundum rationem humanam, sed quod sequantur interiorem instinctum, quia moventur a meliori principio quam sit ratio humana.”

¹⁰⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1 ad 1.

¹⁰⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1 ad 4: “[S]apientia dicitur intellectualis virtus, secundum quod procedit ex iudicio rationis, dicitur autem donum, secundum quod operatur ex instinctu divino.”

¹⁰⁸ O’Meara, “Virtues in the Theology of Aquinas,” p. 269.

Levering writes, “The gifts of the Holy Spirit conform the believer to Christ by *connaturalizing the believer to God’s ways*.”¹⁰⁹ Not surprisingly, as Pinckaers observes, the highest concentration of the word “instinct” occurs at *STh* I-II, q. 68, the question that Thomas devotes to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰

In the case of purely human matters the natural virtues suffice to perfect man according as he is moved by his reason with regard to interior and exterior actions which direct him to his natural end. While we possess the natural virtues perfectly since they are proportioned to the human mode of being, we possess the theological virtues imperfectly since we can know and love God only imperfectly. Whatever possesses a nature or form or virtue imperfectly, however, requires to be moved by another. Thus, for example, “the sun which possesses light perfectly, can shine by itself; whereas the moon which has the nature of light imperfectly, sheds only a borrowed light.”¹¹¹ And, again, the physician who knows his art perfectly can work by himself whereas his student cannot yet work by himself but needs rather to be taught by him.¹¹² The theological virtues, therefore, since they are possessed imperfectly, need to be moved by the Holy Spirit. In other words, in order to achieve his supernatural end, “it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost.”¹¹³ Since the Gifts dispose man to be moved by a principle higher than human reason, namely by the Holy Spirit, it follows that they perfect him to perform acts which are higher than acts of virtue. As

¹⁰⁹ Matthew Levering, “Wisdom and the Viability of Thomistic Trinitarian Theology,” *The Thomist* 64 (2000), p. 599.

¹¹⁰ See Pinckaers, “Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit,” p. 388.

¹¹¹ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2: “[S]ol, quia est perfecte lucidus, per seipsum potest illuminare, luna autem, in qua est imperfecte natura lucis, non illuminat nisi illuminata.”

¹¹² See *ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*: “[N]ecessarium est homini habere donum spiritus sancti.”

Pinckaers comments, “the gift is a disposition to receive the action of the Holy Spirit, which penetrates to the very heart of our spirit, our freedom, and our virtues, in order to give us a superior impulse in the form of inspiration.”¹¹⁴ In the same vein, von Balthasar writes: “The inspiration ... descends upon believing man from the heights of the absolute as the absolute genius which is essentially superior to man in every respect. And yet, at the same time, the inspiration rises from man’s own most intimate depths; it is the person himself who loves and tastes God, and not an alien principle that does this through the person.”¹¹⁵ The Spirit Who inspires us, let us recall, proceeds from the Son. The Gifts by which the Holy Spirit divinizes us in the core of our being therefore both bear a Christological impress and conform us to the Son.

Rikhof has incisively noted the profound implications of Thomas’s conclusion to the response of *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2. Thomas states his conclusion as follows:

But in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man’s reason moves him, according as it is, in a manner, and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy Ghost, according to Rm. viii. 14,17: *Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God . . . and if sons, heirs also*: and Ps. cxlii. 10: *Thy good Spirit shall lead me into the right land*, because, to wit, none can receive the inheritance of that land of the Blessed, except he be moved and led thither by the

¹¹⁴ Pinckaers, “Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit,” p. 389.

¹¹⁵ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics.*, vol. I, *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press/New York: Crossroad Publications, 1982), p. 250.

Holy Ghost. Therefore, in order to accomplish this end, it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost.¹¹⁶

The first point to be noted in this conclusion is that even if we possess the theological virtues we still know and love God only imperfectly. What is required in addition is the *instinctus* or movement of the Holy Spirit. A second and striking point is the appeal Thomas makes to Scripture, quoting from Rom 8 and Ps 142. Once again Scripture functions as the fundamental guide in Thomas's speculations. When we examine these Scriptural texts we see that they both talk about movement imparted by the Spirit. It will be recalled that the previous article has already analyzed the notion of movement. As Rikhof notes, however, the present article fills the rather formal analyses of the previous article with "the rich notions of becoming and being children of God, of heirs and inheritance, of reaching the promised Fatherland."¹¹⁷ The third significant point in Thomas's conclusion concerns his reference to "the gift of the Holy Ghost" (*donum spiritus sancti*) in the singular as distinct from the plural 'Gifts' (*dona*). Notably, the singular is also employed at the outset of this article: "Wherefore in those matters where the prompting of reason is not sufficient, and there is need for the prompting of the Holy Ghost, there is, in consequence, need for a gift."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 1: "Sed in ordine ad finem ultimum supernaturalem, ad quem ratio movet secundum quod est aliquantulum et imperfecte formata per virtutes theologicas, non sufficit ipsa motio rationis, nisi desuper adsit instinctus et motio spiritus sancti, secundum illud Rom. VIII, *qui spiritu Dei aguntur, hi filii Dei sunt; et si filii, et haeredes*, et in Psalmo CXLII dicitur, *spiritus tuus bonus deducet me in terram rectam*; quia scilicet in haereditatem illius terrae beatorum nullus potest pervenire, nisi moveatur et deducatur a spiritu sancto. Et ideo ad illum finem consequendum, necessarium est homini habere donum spiritus sancti."

¹¹⁷ Rikhof, "Theological Virtues," p. 27.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*: "Unde in his in quibus non sufficit instinctus rationis, sed est necessarius spiritus sancti instinctus, per consequens est necessarium donum."

These two comments with their use of the singular *donum* indicate that what Thomas has to say about the Gifts is intimately connected with his discussions about the Holy Spirit in the *Prima Pars*, both in his treatment of the name ‘Gift’ at *STh* I, q. 38, and in his reflections concerning the divine missions at *STh* I, q. 43. It is to be recalled that Thomas concludes the second article devoted to the name of the Holy Spirit as ‘Gift’ as follows:

Hence it is manifest that love has the nature of a first gift, through which all free gifts are given. So since the Holy Ghost proceeds as love ... He proceeds as the first gift. Hence Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 24): *By the gift, which is the Holy Ghost, many particular gifts are portioned out to the members of Christ.*¹¹⁹

The gift of the Holy Spirit is also referred to as the gift of sanctifying grace, a point that is brought out by Thomas in his discussion of the invisible mission of the divine Person according to the gift of sanctifying grace at *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3. There Thomas deals with the objection that “if the divine person is sent only according to the gift of sanctifying grace, the divine person Himself will not be given, but only His gifts.”¹²⁰ In his reply to this objection Thomas writes:

By the gift of sanctifying grace the rational creature is perfected so that it can freely use not only the created gift itself, but enjoy also the divine person Himself; and so

¹¹⁹ *STh* I, q. 38 a. 2: “Unde manifestum est quod amor habet rationem primi doni, per quod omnia dona gratuita donantur. Unde, cum spiritus sanctus procedat ut amor ... procedit in ratione doni primi. Unde dicit Augustinus, XV de Trin., quod *per donum quod est spiritus sanctus, multa propria dona dividuntur membris Christi.*”

¹²⁰ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 *obj.* 1: “Si igitur divina persona mittitur solum secundum dona gratiae gratum facientis, non donabitur ipsa persona divina, sed solum dona eius.”

the invisible mission takes place according to the gift of sanctifying grace; and yet the divine person Himself is given.¹²¹

The final sentence of the main body of the article at *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2 offers a definite positive response to the question as to whether the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are necessary for salvation: they most certainly are. Expressed in other terms, the Gifts are a *sine qua non* for the human attainment of final Beatitude. The question then arises as to how we are to understand the nature of these Gifts that are not just a special endowment accorded to some spiritual elite. Thomas frames his discussion of the nature of the Gifts in the same terms that he has already employed in his treatment of the virtues since there is a point of similarity between them: both perfect already existing dispositions. An examination of the parallel relationship between the virtues and the appetitive power, on the one hand, and the Gifts and the human person, on the other hand, serves to clarify the nature of the Gifts. The appetitive power possesses a natural aptitude to be moved by reason inasmuch as “it partakes somewhat of the reason”¹²² and the virtues perfect this aptitude. In a similar manner the Gifts are perfections of the human person “whereby he becomes amenable to the promptings of the Holy Ghost.”¹²³ Thus, just as the moral virtues perfect the appetitive powers so that they readily obey reason, so too do the Gifts perfect us so that we readily obey the Holy Spirit.

¹²¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 ad 3: “[P]er donum gratiae gratum facientis perficitur creatura rationalis, ad hoc quod libere non solum ipso dono creato utatur, sed ut ipsa divina persona fruatur. Et ideo missio invisibilis fit secundum donum gratiae gratum facientis, et tamen ipsa persona divina datur.”

¹²² *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 3: “[P]articipat aliquantulum rationem.”

¹²³ *Ibid.*: “[D]ona sunt quaedam perfectiones hominis, quibus disponitur ad hoc quod homo bene sequatur instinctum spiritus sancti.”

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit confer a more exalted mode of operation on intellect and will since they render these faculties more amenable to divine inspiration. In disposing us to be moved by a principle higher than human reason they perfect us to perform acts that are higher than acts of virtue. The more exalted is this disposition to be moved by a principle higher than human reason, the more our wills work in conjunction with the Holy Spirit, albeit in a manner that does not compromise our freedom. The human being “is so acted upon by the Holy Ghost, that he also acts himself, in so far as he has a free-will.”¹²⁴ Indeed, the greater the extent to which the Holy Spirit takes over the life of the believer, the greater the freedom he enjoys and the more his actions are truly his own. Thus, as Pinckaers observes, the source of morality resides within us but at the same time “flows as a continuous gift from God, who grants us the greatest gift, the Holy Spirit.”¹²⁵ The role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian is indispensable. Thus we see verified again a point that we made in chapter two in dealing with Thomas’s Trinitarian theology: although one theological cliché that has exercised an important influence on current perspectives concerning the history of theology maintains that Western theology has neglected the role of the Trinity in the economy of salvation,¹²⁶ this accusation can in no way be leveled against Thomas.

At this point in our study it is not our intention to give a detailed outline and analysis of each of the seven Gifts: wisdom, understanding, knowledge, counsel, piety, fortitude, fear

¹²⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 3 ad 2: “[S]ic agitur a spiritu sancto, quod etiam agit, inquantum est liberi arbitrii.”

¹²⁵ Pinckaers, “Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit,” p. 395.

¹²⁶ See Rahner, *The Trinity*. See also the comment by Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us*, p. 145: “Thomas Aquinas’ doctrine of God is frequently held out as the paradigm instance of the separation of *theologia* from *oikonomia*. Karl Rahner bluntly criticized Thomas and scholasticism in general for developing a doctrine of the Trinity that is focused on intradivine life, to the virtual exclusion of the activity of the persons in the economy of salvation.”

of the Lord.¹²⁷ An extended treatment of the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, counsel, and wisdom will be offered in chapters seven and eight. As in the case of the theological virtues of faith and charity, our purpose has been simply to highlight the transformative effects of grace on human knowing and willing in Thomas's theology. In this regard we have seen how we require the theological virtues in order to be proportioned to an end, namely final Beatitude, that transcends our natural capacity to attain. The theological virtues in turn constitute the principles of the other infused virtues. They might be described as the seeds of these infused cardinal virtues. The theological virtues, however, are not sufficient on their own to direct us to supernatural Beatitude. Also required are the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to dispose us to be moved by God. The action of grace in so far as we have depicted it in this section not only transforms the nature of virtue, it also transforms the human capacities for knowing and willing.

3. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the participation in the divine life wrought by grace. This participation is possible because of the transformation brought about in the human person on account of grace. It is precisely this radical change that proportions the Christian to his true supernatural end, namely the triune God. By grace, which is the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul, the human person habitually knows and loves God with God's own knowledge and love, albeit in a mode proportioned to his finite mode of being and subject to the sinfulness of the human condition. In this way, the soul "is made like to God by grace."¹²⁸ The sending of a divine Person therefore entails "a likening of the soul to the divine person

¹²⁷ See *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 4.

¹²⁸ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: "[P]er gratiam conformatur Deo."

Who is sent, by some gift of grace.”¹²⁹ The missions of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, when considered with regard to the effect of grace, “are united in the root which is grace.”¹³⁰ They are nevertheless distinguished “in the effects of grace, which consist in the illumination of the intellect and the kindling of the affection.”¹³¹ These “effects of grace” clearly refer to the impact of the theological and the other infused virtues as well as of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit on human knowing and willing.

While it is not possible to give an account of grace without some treatment of its effects, the intention of this chapter has been to focus on grace, that is to say, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, as the causal ground of these transformative effects which illuminate the intellect and kindle affectivity. Chapters seven and nine view the transformative effects of grace on knowing and willing from the perspective of the theological virtues of faith and charity and of that understanding, knowledge, counsel, and wisdom which are Gifts of the Holy Spirit. In chapter seven we turn our attention to a consideration of the illumination of the intellect by faith and by the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, and counsel while in chapter nine we will consider the kindling of the affection by charity. Finally, we will examine Thomas’s doctrine concerning the gift of wisdom which is a function of faith and charity.¹³² As a prelude to the discussion of chapter seven concerning the epistemically transformative effects of faith, the next chapter will discuss Thomas’s analysis of the act of faith with regard to both its formal and material aspects and with regard to the role of the Church in ensuring the veracity of the material object of faith. In effect, chapter six deals with

¹²⁹ Ibid.: “[O]portet quod fiat assimilatio illius ad divinam personam quae mittitur per aliquod gratiae donum.”

¹³⁰ *STh* I, q. 45 a. 3 ad 3: “[C]ommunicant duae missiones in radice gratiae.”

¹³¹ Ibid.: “[I]n effectibus gratiae, qui sunt illuminatio intellectus, et inflammatio affectus.”

¹³² *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: “[S]apientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem, sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare.”

faith in its objective constitution while chapter seven treats of faith with respect to its engagement with the subject who believes.

CHAPTER VI

A HERMENEUTICS OF FAITH

The transformation wrought by grace that we have detailed in the last chapter is the fruit of the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit. Wherever one Person is present, however, there dwell all three Persons. Thus, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit implies the presence also of the Father and the Son: “The whole Trinity dwells in the mind by sanctifying grace.”¹ The mind itself is a created analogue of the Trinity: its structure furnishes an analogical representation of the eternal procession of the divine Persons. It is precisely this finite analogical representation whereby man is made to the image of the Trinity that establishes the condition for the possibility of the divine missions. It is possible for God to be in man in a special mode – beyond the common mode whereby He is in all things by His essence, power and presence – because man can know and love God. In the exercise of his capacity to know and to love man can attain to God Himself and God therefore can be said to dwell within him as within His own temple.² The Incarnation of the Word furnishes the indispensable condition for us to know and to love God as a Trinity of Persons. In virtue of His divinity Christ authoritatively bestows grace on us while His humanity is an instrument of His divinity in this regard. To say that He bestows His grace on us is the same as to say that He sends the Holy Spirit. The last two chapters have deliberated on the reality of grace both in its Christological and in its Pneumatological aspects in order to advance our understanding of the major focus of this study, namely the transformative effects of Christian revelation for human knowing and willing.

¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5: “[P]er gratiam gratum facientem tota Trinitas inhabitat mentem.”

² See *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3.

The focus of the final chapters of this work is on faith and charity along with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that pertain to the intellect/reason and will – chapter seven dealing with understanding, knowledge, and counsel while chapter nine treats of wisdom – with a view to eliciting their hermeneutical significance, that is to say, with a view to showing how for Thomas they enter into the fundamental constitution of the way in which we perceive reality and the way in which our reason unfolds on the basis of this perception. The way in which we construe reality is a function of our conception of what constitutes ultimate happiness. Faith proposes a particular conception of Beatitude and, so Thomas tells us, the articles of faith function as first principles of our intellect with regard to being directed towards this end. In other words, with regard to our supernatural end, the supernatural principles of the intellect are furnished by a divine light, namely “the articles of faith, about which is faith.”³ This assertion indicates the central place that the articles of the Creed/symbol occupy in Thomas’s conception of faith. This contention receives further support from the fact that they comprise the subject matter of much of the first question on faith in the *Secunda Pars Secundae*. The articles of the symbol pertain to what Thomas terms the material object of faith.

The very first question of the *Secunda Pars Secundae*, however, deals with the formal object of faith, namely the First Truth. The place of this discussion in Thomas’s scheme of things indicates its importance to him. The next section therefore outlines Thomas’s discussion in this regard. It explains the distinction between the ‘formal’ and ‘material’ objects of faith and explicates the assertion that the formal object of faith excludes any complexity. The human intellect is however incapable of knowing God in His simplicity on account of the mode of cognition proper to it, which mode of cognition operates by way of synthesis and analysis. Hence, a treatment of the formal object of faith, namely God as First

³ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 3: “[H]aec sunt credibilia, de quibus est fides.”

Truth, prepares the way for a discussion of the articles of faith as truth-bearing propositions. The articles of the symbol do not constitute the terminus of the believer's act of faith; rather, the act of faith terminates in the Trinitarian God about Whom the articles speak. Their central role in the divinization of the believer therefore becomes apparent since they bring the believer into spiritual contact with the Trinity of Persons. While the number of articles to be held by faith has increased with the passage of time, the substance of the faith has not altered. Later doctrines defined by the Church are virtually contained in primary matters of faith and so the act of faith in these later articles also terminates in the Trinitarian God. The truth of these articles is guaranteed by the fact that the Church is animated by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. On the basis of Thomas's view that the unity of the Church is the unity of faith – as well as the unity of hope and charity – one can describe faith as being ecclesial in character. By extension, so the latter part of this chapter will suggest, Thomas's theology of the Church possesses a hermeneutical significance.

1. The formal object of faith: God as First Truth

At the outset of his discussion of whether the object of faith is the First Truth at *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1, Thomas draws a distinction between the material and formal aspect of the object of every cognitive habit. The notion of material object refers to what is known materially while the formal aspect of the object denotes that whereby the object is known. A concrete example helps to understand this distinction: in the science of geometry what is known materially are the conclusions while the mean of demonstration, through which the geometer can attain these conclusions, furnishes the formal aspect of the science. These two aspects of the object of every cognitive habit cannot be grasped independently of each other. As the example from the science of geometry indicates, the material aspect of the object is

grasped under and by way of the formal. The formal and material aspects of an object are understood together by one and the same cognitive act.

In light of the foregoing distinction, Thomas affirms in the same article that the formal object of faith is God as First Truth, for faith assents only to what is revealed by God.⁴ As Benoît Duroux, O.P., observes, the formulation *quia est a Deo revelatum* (“because it is revealed by God”) makes clear the connection between the content of the documents of revelation and God.⁵ This interpretation is supported when Thomas goes on to write that faith therefore (*unde*) relies on the divine truth as the medium of its assent.⁶ T.C. O’Brien comments that Thomas’s remarks here make revelation “to mean primarily not a body of truths but God himself revealing.” Faith first of all “accepts God speaking before it terminates in what God speaks.”⁷

While the formal object of faith is God as First Truth, we can also consider materially the things to which we assent in faith. Things such as Christ’s human nature, the sacraments of the Church, and creatures are the material objects of faith “in so far as by them we are directed to God, and in as much as we assent to them on account of the Divine Truth.”⁸

⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1. See Henry Donneaud, O.P., “Objet formel et objet matériel de la foi : genèse d’un instrument philosophique chez s. Thomas et quelques autres,” *Revue Thomiste* 100 (2000), pp. 11-13, for an explication of the distinction between ‘formal object of faith’ and ‘material object of faith’ in the *Summa Theologiae*.

⁵ Benoît Duroux, O.P., *La psychologie de la foi chez saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Tournai : Desclée, 1963), p. 15: “[L]a Somme précise la connexion de tout ce que renferment les documents de la révélation avec l’objet principal, Dieu.”

⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1: “[U]nde ipsi veritati divinae innititur tanquam medio.”

⁷ *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 31 (2a2ae. 1-7), *Faith*, ed. by T.C. O’Brien (Blackfriars, 1974), footnote *k*, pp. 8-9.

⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1 ad 1: “[I]n quantum per haec ordinamur ad Deum. Et eis etiam assentimus propter divinam veritatem.”

Nevertheless, the material objects of faith command the assent of faith only because they bear some relation to God. The material aspect of the object of faith is grasped under and by way of the formal aspect. The formal and material objects of faith are indissociable. The material objects of faith can be viewed as “certain effects of the Divine operation”⁹ which assist us on our journey towards ultimate Beatitude.¹⁰ Beatitude furnishes the end towards which faith points and moves us. Implicit in Thomas’s remarks is the idea that faith does not concern the speculative intellect alone but that it has implications for the life of practical reason also, a point that will receive further elaboration in the next chapter when we examine Thomas’s theology of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in greater detail. In the context of *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1, it suffices to say that God as the formal object of faith is identical with God as our final Beatitude. Duroux interprets Thomas in a similar vein: “[T]he First Truth must ... be considered *in a twofold manner: as Truth and as End*.”¹¹ Duroux continues:

As Truth it pertains to intelligence which beholds it obscurely here below and will grasp it intuitively in its homeland. As End it is what will be seen by intelligence but this time considered as completion and Beatitude. Beatitude is nothing other than “joy

⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 1: “[A]liquos divinitatis effectus.”

¹⁰ See *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 6 ad 1: “[F]ides principaliter est de his quae videnda speramus in patria, secundum illud Heb. XI, *fides est substantia sperandarum rerum*; ideo per se ad fidem pertinent illa quae directe nos ordinant ad vitam aeternam, sicut sunt tres personae, omnipotentia Dei, mysterium incarnationis Christi, et alia huiusmodi. Et secundum ista distinguuntur articuli fidei”; and, *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 8: “[I]lla per se pertinent ad fidem quorum visione in vita aeterna perfruemur, et per quae ducemur in vitam aeternam.”

¹¹ Duroux, *La psychologie de la foi chez saint Thomas d’Aquin*, pp. 45-46: “La Vérité première doit ... être considérée sous deux raisons diverses : comme Vérité et comme Fin.”

in the truth.”¹² Vision itself is the end: to see truth is to possess it. Under the *ratio* of end the First Truth offers itself to the will.¹³

Since Beatitude furnishes the horizon towards which the moral life of the believer aims – “Man must of necessity, desire all, whatsoever he desires, for the last end”¹⁴ – it follows that faith and morals are inextricably entwined. There can be no such thing as an autonomous morality for a Christian, that is to say, a morality that has no reference to the content of the faith. Consequently, the way in which we ought to conduct ourselves in order to attain to final Beatitude must be construed in the light of the formal object of faith, under and by means of which the material objects of faith are grasped. This point is illustrated by Thomas by the analogy of medicine and health: the formal object of medicine, namely health, is ordered towards a practical end – which is also none other than health. The formal object is

¹² *In Joh X*, lectio I [1370]: “[N]ihil aliud est beatitudo quam gaudium de veritate.”

¹³ Duroux, *La psychologie de la foi chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 46: “Comme Vérité elle fait face à l'intelligence qui la tient obscurément ici-bas et la saisira intuitivement dans la patrie. Comme Fin elle est encore ce qui sera vu par l'intelligence, mais considéré cette fois comme achèvement et béatitude. La béatitude n'est rien d'autre que le « gaudium de veritate ». La vision elle-même est fin : voir la vérité, c'est la posséder. Sous cette raison de fin, la Vérité première s'offre à la volonté.”

¹⁴ *STh I-II*, q. 1 a. 6: “[O]mnia quae homo appetit, appetat propter ultimum finem.” Thomas continues: “[H]oc apparet duplici ratione. Primo quidem, quia quidquid homo appetit, appetit sub ratione boni. Quod quidem si non appetitur ut bonum perfectum, quod est ultimus finis, necesse est ut appetatur ut tendens in bonum perfectum, quia semper inchoatio alicuius ordinatur ad consummationem ipsius; sicut patet tam in his quae fiunt a natura, quam in his quae fiunt ab arte. Et ideo omnis inchoatio perfectionis ordinatur in perfectionem consummatam, quae est per ultimum finem. Secundo, quia ultimus finis hoc modo se habet in movendo appetitum, sicut se habet in aliis motionibus primum movens. Manifestum est autem quod causae secundae moventes non movent nisi secundum quod moventur a primo movente. Unde secunda appetibilia non movent appetitum nisi in ordine ad primum appetibile, quod est ultimus finis.”

the medium of assent for the material objects which are ordered towards the attainment of the final end, which end is identical with the formal object. Expressed in terms of faith, the First Truth is the medium of assent for the articles of faith contained in the symbol, assent to which orders the believer to final Beatitude, namely to union with God Who is the First Truth.

God as First Truth Itself (as well as ultimate Beatitude) is simple and therefore admits no complexity.¹⁵ In order to appreciate what Thomas means by this assertion the reader of the *Summa* should recall something of what Thomas writes at *STh* I, q. 3, a question devoted to the notion of God's simplicity. This question is part of Thomas's discussion of how God is not (*quomodo non sit*).¹⁶ As this phrase indicates, divine simplicity is a negative concept. In what follows it will become evident that it is a very important concept to which God-talk must submit itself as to a guide. The placing of the discussion of the divine simplicity before the treatment of the other divine attributes supports this understanding.

Article seven of this question, which asks whether God is absolutely simple, begins by summarizing the conclusions of the articles that precede it:

[T]here is neither composition of quantitative parts in God, since He is not a body; nor composition of matter and form; nor does His nature differ from His *suppositum*; nor His essence from His existence; neither is there in Him composition of genus and difference, nor of subject and accident. Therefore, it is clear that God is nowise composite, but is altogether simple.¹⁷

¹⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2.

¹⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 3 proem.

¹⁷ *STh* I, q. 3 a. 7: "[I]n Deo non sit compositio, neque quantitativarum partium, quia corpus non est; neque compositio formae et materiae, neque in eo sit aliud natura et suppositum; neque aliud essentia et esse, neque in

Thomas then proceeds to offer a host of other reasons in support of God's absolute simplicity. Thus for example, in one argument he appeals to the notions of cause and effect, asserting that all composite things necessarily have a cause since their various parts could not unite unless something caused them to do so. As te Velde expresses the point, "What is composed is ... necessarily derivative in character, and as such dependent on something that is simple and prior."¹⁸ God, in contrast to His effects, is uncaused – as Thomas has shown at *STh* I, q. 2 a. 3, where he proves that God is the First Efficient Cause of all that exists. Since He is uncaused, God can therefore in no way be said to be a composite being. In other words, God cannot be reduced to something prior and must therefore be simple.

In this context particular mention should be made of the denial of any composition of essence and *esse* in God. God's created effects receive their existence (*esse*) in a mode that is proportioned to their particular finite natures. Thus, for example, for a cat, to be means to be a cat; the cat has existence according to its feline mode of being. No created being can lay claim to an identity of essence and *esse*; rather, *esse* is limited by the created essence. Created finite things are constituted by the composition of essence and *esse*. As te Velde writes, "This complexity (or non-identity) of being, according to which a thing must be said 'to be this but not that', defines the ontological status of a creature."¹⁹ In contrast, any such composition cannot be ascribed to God Who is the cause of all finite reality and self-subsistent existence itself. We must therefore ascribe to God the whole perfection of being; God lacks no perfection. Thomas quotes Dionysius in this regard: "*God exists not in any single mode, but*

eo sit compositio generis et differentiae; neque subiecti et accidentis, manifestum est quod Deus nullo modo compositus est, sed est omnino simplex."

¹⁸ te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, p. 78.

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 78-9.

embraces all being within Himself, absolutely, without limitation, uniformly.”²⁰ As te Velde remarks, “God is not a *particular* being among others, not even the highest one: He *is* His being.”²¹

The fact that God is absolutely simple in the sense described above places Him beyond the ken of human cognition. He cannot be the object of human knowledge since human beings are not so constituted as to be able to know simple objects. The human intellect comes to knowledge of the truth by way of synthesis/composition and analysis/division.²² Thomas explains:

[T]he human intellect does not acquire perfect knowledge by the first act of apprehension; but it first apprehends something about its object, such as its quiddity, and this is its first and proper object; and then it understands the properties, accidents, and the various relations of the essence. Thus it necessarily compares one thing with another by composition or division; and from one composition and division it proceeds to another, which is the process of reasoning.²³

²⁰ *STh* I, q. 4 a. 2: “[H]anc etiam rationem tangit Dionysius, cap. V de Div. Nom., dicens quod *Deus non quodammodo est existens, sed simpliciter et incircumscripse totum in seipso uniformiter esse praeaccipit.*”

²¹ Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, p. 79.

²² See *STh* I, q. 85 a. 5.

²³ *Ibid.*: “[I]ntellectus humanus non statim in prima apprehensione capit perfectam rei cognitionem; sed primo apprehendit aliquid de ipsa, puta quidditatem ipsius rei, quae est primum et proprium obiectum intellectus; et deinde intelligit proprietates et accidentia et habitudines circumstantes rei essentiam. Et secundum hoc, necesse habet unum apprehensum alii componere vel dividere; et ex una compositione vel divisione ad aliam procedere, quod est ratiocinari.”

Whatever it knows must be known in this way, that is to say, by way of composition and division. The human intellect cannot know things that are simple in themselves precisely as simple. Things that are simple in themselves are rather known with a certain complexity in accordance with the principle that “The thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower.”²⁴ Since God is utterly simple it follows that the human intellect cannot know him in accordance with His simplicity; rather, its knowledge of Him must be attained by way of synthesis and analysis.

Thomas also elaborates at *STh* I, q. 12 a. 4, on the implications of the principle that “the thing known is in the knower according to the mode of the knower.”²⁵ A being’s nature determines what it can know. Consequently, if the mode of being of anything exceeds the mode of being of the knower, so too will knowledge of that thing lie beyond the capacity of the knower to attain. Human beings as psychosomatically constituted can know singulars thanks to the senses and they can grasp universals thanks to the intellect. The power to grasp universals is of course beyond the power of sense and yet is not possible without this power since the intellect is united to the body in the present state of life. To know self-subsistent being is therefore impossible for us. Indeed, such knowledge is beyond the capacity of any created intellect unless God unites Himself to it by His grace.

Even by grace we cannot know God’s essence but are “united to Him as to one unknown”²⁶ although rational reflection on His effects enables us to know Him more fully and revelation, of course, delivers to us knowledge that natural reason cannot reach. This graced knowledge remains however within the confines of the mode of cognition proper to human beings and is therefore communicated by way of true affirmative propositions. Thus,

²⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2: “[C]ognita sunt in cognoscente secundum modum cognoscentis.”

²⁵ *STh* I, q. 12 a. 4: “Cognitum autem est in cognoscente secundum modum cognoscentis.”

²⁶ *STh* I, q. 12 a. 13: “[E]i quasi ignoto coniungamur.”

while the formal object of faith is simple, on the part of the believer the material object of faith is “something complex by way of proposition.”²⁷ The material object of faith, which is proportioned to the mode of cognition proper to human beings, is communicated to us in the symbol by means of the various propositions that constitute it. Faith does not negate the laws of human psychology and therefore requires an act of judgment on the part of the one who believes. The act of faith, however, because of its object, is essentially supernatural.

This section has called attention to the distinction between the formal and material objects of faith while emphasizing the fact that they are grasped inseparably by one and the same cognitive act. Our analysis has suggested that since it is the same God Who is the formal object of faith and Who is our final Beatitude there obtains an intimate connection between faith and morals. By way of reference to Thomas’s treatment of the divine simplicity in the *Prima Pars* we have attempted to clarify what he means by his assertion that the formal object of faith admits of no complexity. We have noted that the human intellect is incapable of knowing God in His simplicity but rather “knows Him by different conceptions,”²⁸ that is to say, by means of different propositions. God has revealed Himself to us in a mode proportioned to human understanding, which revelation is documented in Scripture and given summary expression in the Creed/symbol. We believe the propositions of the symbol on account of the First Truth Who reveals Himself by these means. Since the formal object of faith (God as First Truth) is identical with our final Beatitude and since whatever (propositions) we believe, we believe on account of the First Truth revealing, it follows that the various propositions that constitute the articles of the symbol possess a profound significance for the life of moral reason.

²⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2: “[O]biectum fidei est aliquid complexum per modum enuntiabilis.”

²⁸ *STh* I, q. 13 a. 12: “[I]ntellectus noster secundum diversas conceptiones ipsum cognoscit.”

The next section turns to the exposition of the faith in the symbol, which symbol brings the believer into spiritual contact with God in a way that is proportioned to the mode of being proper to human beings, that is to say, by means of the various propositions that constitute it.²⁹ It will be seen that there are certain fundamental matters of faith in which are implicitly contained all the other articles. This idea provides support for the contention that the substance of the articles of faith has not altered over time while at the same time allowing for a development of doctrine. In addition to this historical development and transmission of doctrine, however, there is also in Thomas a hierarchical account of the transmission of doctrine.

2. The material object of faith

Initially, it might seem that the symbol does not consist of propositions for when one examines it one does not encounter propositions but rather things. As stated in an objection, “it is not stated therein that God is almighty, but: *I believe in God ... almighty*.”³⁰ On this basis, it would seem that “the object of faith is not a proposition but a thing,”³¹ ultimately the reality of God Himself as First Truth. The response to this objection makes it clear however that the manner in which the articles of faith are formulated in the symbol reflects the fact that faith terminates in the realities communicated by the articles: “The symbol touches (or

²⁹ See *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 6 ad 1: “[A]d fidem pertinent illa quae directe nos ordinant ad vitam aeternam, sicut sunt tres personae, omnipotentia Dei, mysterium incarnationis Christi, et alia huiusmodi. Et secundum ista distinguuntur articuli fidei.” For Thomas’s discussion of the content and structure of the symbol, see *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 8.

³⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2 *arg.* 2: “[N]on enim dicitur ibi quod Deus sit omnipotens, sed, credo in Deum omnipotentem.”

³¹ *Ibid.*: “[O]biectum fidei non est enuntiabile, sed res.”

reaches) the things about which faith is, in so far as the act of the believer is terminated in them, as is evident from the manner of speaking about them.”³² In this respect the function of those propositions about which faith is are no different from the function of propositions in science: in both cases the aim is “to have knowledge of things through their means.”³³ The articles of the symbol serve as instruments that bring the believer into spiritual contact with the realities that they express. The Christian is not bound by the concepts in which the faith is expressed but rather transcends them in order to experience the mysteries.³⁴ As Cessario writes, “the act of faith reaches beyond the formal content of doctrines and attains the very referent – “*res ipsa*” – of theological faith.”³⁵ The propositions that ground the symbol mediate, for their part, God’s very own Truth to human beings in a manner that respects the structure of human cognition. They therefore play a fundamental and indispensable role in elevating the intellect beyond the limits of what it can attain by its natural forces. By extension, they guide the acts of hope and charity, “For the movement of the appetite cannot tend to anything, either by hoping or loving, unless that thing be apprehended by the sense or the intellect” and “it is by faith that the intellect apprehends the object of hope and love.”³⁶ The propositions of faith are integral both to the divinization that faith initiates in the human subject and to the transformation of the believer’s conduct of life. Concerning this point,

³² *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2 ad 2: “[I]n symbolo tanguntur ea de quibus est fides inquantum ad ea terminatur actus credentis, ut ex ipso modo loquendi apparet.” My trans. The translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province has “mention” for *tanguntur*.

³³ *Ibid.*: “[N]on enim formamus enuntiabilia nisi ut per ea de rebus cognitionem habeamus.”

³⁴ See Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life*, p. 68.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 4: “Non enim potest in aliquid motus appetitivus tendere vel sperando vel amando, nisi quod est apprehensum sensu aut intellectu. Per fidem autem apprehendit intellectus ea quae sperat et amat.”

Cessario writes that “a finite gift enables a creature to share in the proper Truth of the uncreated God.” He continues:

For while faith, operating within the human cognitional structure, truly attains God, it does so mediately, through the instrumentality of the proposition or *enuntiabile*. The mediation of propositions, however, does not impede but achieves the attainment of the real Truth.³⁷

The notion that propositions provide a means whereby the believer participates in God’s Truth can be applied to doctrine as it has developed throughout the Church’s history. In this regard, Thomas draws an analogy between the relationship of the articles of faith to the doctrine of faith, on the one hand, and of self-evident principles to a doctrine derived and developed therefrom. Among the principles that ground the operation of natural reason there obtains a certain order with the result that some principles are contained implicitly in others. Ultimately, all principles are reduced, as to their first principle, to the principle of non-contradiction: a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect. The same kind of dynamic is operative with regard to the articles of faith: there are certain primary matters of faith in which are implicitly contained all the other articles. The primary articles include such things as “God’s existence, and His providence over the salvation of man.”³⁸ Thus, explains Thomas, “the existence of God includes all that we believe to exist in God eternally, and in these our happiness exists; while belief in His providence includes all those things which God dispenses in time, for man’s salvation, and which are the way to

³⁷ Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life*, pp. 71-72.

³⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 7: “[Credetur] Deus esse et providentiam habere circa hominum salutem.”

happiness.”³⁹ The Incarnation of Christ and His Passion are obvious instances of those things which God dispenses in time for our salvation and are included in the article of faith concerning the redemption of humankind. One can, in brief, discern a hierarchy in the articles of faith.

Thomas’s reasoning supports both the idea that the substance of the articles of faith has not changed throughout the ages while, at the same time, allowing for a development of doctrine. The substance of the articles of faith has not changed since “whatever those who lived later have believed, was contained, albeit implicitly, in the faith of those Fathers who preceded them.”⁴⁰ There has however been an increase in the number of articles requiring explicit belief – one can think in more recent times, for example, of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and her Assumption.⁴¹ Indeed, as Charles Morerod, O.P., explains: “Already in apostolic times, it was the recognition of Jesus as Son of God that, by grace (for it is not a question of simple logical deduction), led to belief in the Trinity.”⁴² Later believers have held explicitly what earlier Christians did not believe explicitly but rather implicitly. In this regard, Thomas maintains that God has imparted instruction to human beings in a manner fitted to their cognitive capacity. Human reason is discursive and cannot therefore immediately understand everything concerning any subject on its first engagement with it.

³⁹ Ibid.: “In esse enim divino includuntur omnia quae credimus in Deo aeternaliter existere, in quibus nostra beatitudo consistit, in fide autem providentiae includuntur omnia quae temporaliter a Deo dispensantur ad hominum salutem, quae sunt via in beatitudinem.”

⁴⁰ Ibid.: “[Q]uaecumque posteriores crediderunt continebantur in fide praecedentium patrum, licet implicite.”

⁴¹ See Charles Morerod, O.P., *Tradition et unité des Chrétiens: le dogme comme condition de possibilité de l’œcuménisme* (Parole et Silence, 2005), pp. 48-50.

⁴² Ibid., p. 48: “Déjà à l’âge apostolique, c’est la reconnaissance de Jésus-Christ comme fils de Dieu qui, par grâce (il ne s’agit d’une simple déduction logique), mène à croire à la Trinité.”

The same goes for the faith: as time passes we progress in our knowledge of it.⁴³ Thomas is thus cognizant of the historical dimension of faith albeit, as Dauphinais comments, “Historicity is not portrayed in the life of the knowing subject, but rather across the various ages of revelation.”⁴⁴

In the light of the foregoing we can speak of “an ongoing and “horizontal” progress of doctrine in the historical economy of salvation.”⁴⁵ There is nevertheless also a ‘vertical’ ordering in the communication of the faith. The unfolding (*explicatio*) of those things that are to be believed is accomplished through divine revelation since they surpass the capacity of human reason to grasp.⁴⁶ Drawing upon Dionysius’s *Celestial Hierarchy*, IV, 7, Thomas explains that the hierarchy in the transmission of revelation means that revelation reaches human beings through angels and to the lower angels through the higher angels. At the summit of this hierarchy which is the mystical body of the Church stands Christ.⁴⁷ A

⁴³ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 7 ad 2.

⁴⁴ Dauphinais, “The Pedagogy of the Incarnation,” p. 175.

⁴⁵ Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 6: “[E]xplicatio credendorum fit per revelationem divinam, credibilia enim naturalem rationem excedunt.”

⁴⁷ See *STh* III, q. 8 a. 4: “[U]bi est unum corpus, necesse est ponere unum caput. Unum autem corpus similitudinarie dicitur una multitudo ordinata in unum secundum distinctos actus sive officia. Manifestum est autem quod ad unum finem, qui est gloria divinae fruitionis, ordinantur et homines et Angeli. Unde corpus Ecclesiae mysticum non solum consistit ex hominibus, sed etiam ex Angelis. Totius autem huius multitudinis Christus est caput, quia propinquius se habet ad Deum, et perfectius participat dona ipsius, non solum quam homines, sed etiam quam Angeli; et de eius influentia non solum homines recipiunt, sed etiam Angeli. Dicitur enim Ephes. I, quod constituit eum, scilicet Christum Deus pater, *ad dexteram suam in caelestibus, supra omnem principatum et potestatem et virtutem et dominationem, et omne nomen quod nominatur non solum in hoc saeculo, sed etiam in futuro, et omnia subiecit sub pedibus eius*. Et ideo Christus non solum est caput hominum, sed etiam Angelorum. Unde Matth. IV legitur quod *accesserunt Angeli et ministrabant ei*.”

hierarchy also obtains among the faithful as intimated in Thomas's response to the idea that "all are equally bound to have explicit faith."⁴⁸ Thomas argues: "The unfolding of the articles of faith is not equally necessary for the salvation of all, since those of higher degree, whose duty it is to teach others, are bound to believe explicitly more things than others are."⁴⁹ Nevertheless, when the learned go astray the faith of the simple ones for whom they have a duty of care remains intact provided that they are not obstinate in their errors for "it is not human knowledge, but the Divine truth that is the rule of faith."⁵⁰ Faith is therefore not undermined by the vagaries of those who are charged with passing it on.

It would nevertheless obviously not do for all those charged with transmitting the faith to go astray. Such a state of affairs would pose serious difficulties for the integrity of the faith. As we will see in the next section, the holy Catholic Church is preserved from error with regard to the faith on account of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. The material object of the faith as expressed in the articles of the symbol provide the first principles of graced reason's operation. Since the veracity of these articles is guaranteed by the Church, thanks to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, we can refer to the ecclesial character of faith. When we consider the object of faith under its formal aspect, namely God as First Truth, the same conclusion emerges for in this respect all believers share in the same species of faith. Thomas's view that the unity of the Church is the unity of faith also supports the notion of the ecclesial character of faith. Faith – as also hope and charity – are functions of grace, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fundamentally Pneumatological character of

⁴⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 6 *obj.* 1: "[A]equaliter omnes teneantur ad habendum fidem explicitam."

⁴⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 6 ad 1: "[E]xplicatio credendorum non aequaliter quantum ad omnes est de necessitate salutis, quia plura tenentur explicite credere maiores, qui habent officium alios instruendi, quam alii."

⁵⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 6 ad 3: "[H]umana cognitio non fit regula fidei, sed veritas divina."

Thomas's ecclesiology – and, by extension, its Trinitarian character – therefore becomes apparent.

Since the creedal affirmations are firmly rooted in Scripture, it behoves us first of all to say something about the relationship between Scripture and the symbol. There obtains an intimate relationship in Thomas's theology between its various elements – in what follows, between Pneumatology, Church, Scripture, Tradition, and the theological virtues. Some elements of his integral ecclesiological vision will have to be passed over in silence, notably the notion of the Church as the Body of Christ. Without distorting Thomas's teaching, the aim of the next section is to present his vision of the Church within the context of his theology of faith with a view to showing forth the implications of this ecclesiology for the dynamics of human reasoning. In other words, the following section suggests that Thomas's theology of Church has a hermeneutical significance.

3. Scripture, Church, and faith

It is crucial to bear in mind that the profession of faith as expressed in the various symbols cannot be divorced from the witness of Scripture. The truth of faith is contained in Scripture but it is found there, as Thomas explains, “diffusely, under various modes of expression, and sometimes obscurely.”⁵¹ Since many simply would be unable to afford the time necessary in order to penetrate the truth of faith presented there, “it was necessary to gather together a clear summary from the sayings of Holy Writ, to be proposed to the belief

⁵¹ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 ad 1: “[V]eritas fidei in sacra Scriptura diffuse continetur et variis modis, et in quibusdam obscure.”

of all. This indeed was no addition to Holy Writ, but something taken from it.”⁵² The articles of faith contained in the various symbols cannot therefore be viewed as being in any way independent of divine revelation in Scripture. On the contrary, they distil and communicate the essence of this revelation. As such, they bring the believer into the heart of God’s revelation.

With regard to this point, it ought to be borne in mind that the term ‘Scripture’ was understood differently by Thomas than it is nowadays. Thus, for example, Scripture and Tradition are intertwined for Thomas in such a way that he does not posit a clear-cut separation between the teaching of the Church and the teaching of Scripture. Thus we read: “[F]aith adheres to all the articles of faith by reason of one mean, viz. on account of the First Truth proposed to us in the Scriptures, according to the teaching of the Church who has a right understanding of them.”⁵³ Dauphinais comments that “In accepting the Church’s teaching the believer assents to the Truth of Scripture.”⁵⁴ Valkenberg remarks that for Thomas the tradition of the Church is largely “the tradition of explaining Scripture.”⁵⁵ Valkenberg continues:

In this vein, the Church and its tradition can be seen as vehicles for receiving and transmitting the Scriptures in a liturgical and doctrinal setting. The Fathers and

⁵² *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 ad 1: “[F]uit necessarium ut ex sentiis sacrae Scripturae aliquid manifestum summarie colligeretur quod proponeretur omnibus ad credendum. Quod quidem non est additum sacrae Scripturae, sed potius ex sacra Scriptura assumptum.” See also *Comp Theol* I, c. 1.

⁵³ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 3 ad 2: “[O]mnibus articulis fidei inhaeret fides propter unum medium, scilicet propter veritatem primam propositam nobis in Scripturis secundum doctrinam Ecclesiae intellectis sane.”

⁵⁴ Dauphinais, “The Pedagogy of the Incarnation,” p. 180.

⁵⁵ Valkenberg, *Words of the Living God*, p. 11.

Teachers of the Church, the Synods and the Magisterial documents, they are all involved in this *sacra doctrina*: it is a continuing process of handing down the words of God.”⁵⁶

Thomas, however, does not maintain a strict identity between Scripture and Tradition. Thus, for example, he states that “The Apostles, led by the inward instinct of the Holy Ghost, handed down to the churches certain instructions which they did not put into writing, but which have been ordained in accordance with the observance of the Church as practiced by the faithful as time went on.” In support of this position he quotes 2 Thess 2:14 where we read: “*Stand fast; and hold the traditions which you have learned, whether by word – that is by word of mouth – or by our epistle – that is by word put into writing.*”⁵⁷

We should recall that Thomas lived and worked before the Reformation and its catch cry of *sola Scriptura*. The relationship between Scripture and Tradition had not yet been called into question and so did not constitute a subject for systematic theological investigation for Thomas.⁵⁸ Rather, it furnished the context in which Thomas’s own theological thought unfolded. Arguably, Thomas’s thought was shaped in the kind of way suggested in this and the remaining two chapters of this book. The same point concerning

⁵⁶ Ibid. For a discussion of the relationship obtaining between Tradition and Sacred Doctrine, see Yves Congar, “Tradition et Sacra Doctrina, chez saint Thomas d’Aquin,” in *Thomas d’Aquin: sa vision de théologie et de l’Eglise* (London: Valiorum Reprints, 1984), pp. 157-94.

⁵⁷ *STh* III, q. 25 a. 3 ad 4: “[A]postoli, familiari instinctu spiritus sancti, quaedam Ecclesiis tradiderunt servanda quae non reliquerunt in scriptis, sed in observatione Ecclesiae per successionem fidelium sunt ordinata. Unde ipse dicit, II Thess. II, state, et tenete traditiones quas didicistis, sive per sermonem, scilicet ab ore prolatum, sive per epistolam, scilicet scripto transmissam.” See also, for example, *STh* III, q. 64 a. 2 ad 1; *In IV Sent*, d. 23, q. 1 qa. 3 ad 1; *In IV Sent*, d. 23, q. 1 a. 4 qa. 1 ad 1; *De Div Nom* c. 1, lectio 2 [1261]; *Ad I Cor* XI, lectio 7.

⁵⁸ This point was made by Liam Walsh, O.P., in conversation with me.

Scripture and Tradition has also been made about the Church's understanding of herself, that is to say, that theological reflection on the Church was in effect provoked by historical events such as the conflict with secular power at the end of the thirteenth century and the Reformation. G. Sabra, however, lists various developments that could have given rise to reflection on the Church but which in fact did not do so. Included are the challenges posed by heretical groups and by the teachings of Joachim of Fiore as well as the problems concerning the union with the Greek Church. Sabra ascribes the lack of a treatise *De Ecclesia* to Thomas's rich and complex understanding of the Church. This richness and complexity is communicated in the following summary:

The Church as *communio* and as effect of grace is located under its sources and constitutive principles, i.e. grace, Christ, Holy Spirit: the Church as means of salvation and institution is located under the functions, structure and properties of the institution, e.g. sacraments, episcopate, papacy, power of keys, worship, etc. This applies foremost in the *Summa theologiae* because of its strictly systematic and scientific character, but also applies in Thomas' other works and in his ecclesiological thought in general, for the twofold conception and the theological outlook are everywhere in Thomas's theology.⁵⁹

Thus, although Thomas did not elaborate an explicit ecclesiology, an ecclesiology is nonetheless implicit in his reflections on faith, Christ, and the Sacraments, and so on.⁶⁰ The reason given by Sabra for the lack of an explicit ecclesiology in Thomas's work is that "an

⁵⁹ G. Sabra, *Thomas Aquinas' Vision of the Church* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1987), p. 30.

⁶⁰ On this point, see Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P., "La place du pape dans l'Église selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 86 (1986), 392-93.

explicit reflection on some concept presupposes some degree of formal clarity with respect to that concept, but this is precisely what Thomas did not do in his ecclesiology. He operated with an unclarified, ambivalent, rich, and comprehensive notion of the Church that was predominantly theological.”⁶¹

When we turn to the creedal affirmations, we see their ecclesial nature: they are to be believed because they are formulated by the universal Church who “cannot err, since she is governed by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of truth.”⁶² In commenting on the seeming unfitness of proclaiming belief in the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church, Thomas states: “If we say: *“In” the holy Catholic Church*, this must be taken as verified in so far as our faith is directed to the Holy Ghost, Who sanctifies the Church; so that the sense is: *I believe in the Holy Ghost sanctifying the Church*.”⁶³ In stating that the Church is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, Thomas in effect makes his ecclesiology an expression of Pneumatology. In this way he connects his ecclesiology with his Trinitarian theology as well as with grace and the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Grace is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit while the theological virtues are a function of this indwelling. Thus, “the constitution of the Church should be understood,” in the words of Sabra, “in terms of the Holy Spirit causing faith, hope and love.” Indeed, “It is precisely in bringing about these theological virtues that

⁶¹ Sabra, *Thomas Aquinas’ Vision of the Church*, p. 25. Sabra continues: “This fact, however, does not deny that the concept of the Church which he presupposed and which underlay his theology without being the object of formal reflection is in itself clear and consistent.”

⁶² *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 *sed contra*: “[N]on potest errare, quia spiritu sancto gubernatur, qui est spiritus veritatis.” See also III, q. 66 a. 10 *sed contra*.

⁶³ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 ad 5: “[S]i dicatur in sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam, est hoc intelligendum secundum quod fides nostra refertur ad spiritum sanctum, qui sanctificat Ecclesiam, ut sit sensus, credo in spiritum sanctum sanctificantem Ecclesiam.”

the Spirit is church-constitutive.”⁶⁴ According to Eric Luijten’s formulation, “in Thomas’s theology, the Spirit plays an important role in bringing and keeping all men and women together around Christ.”⁶⁵ Moreover, Luijten continues, “sanctifying grace, through which the Trinity inhabits man is ascribed to the Holy Spirit. This implies that all that is involved in becoming a member of the body of Christ, and belonging to the congregation of the faithful is ascribed to the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁶

This point becomes evident in Thomas’s consideration of whether faith is one virtue. The formal object of faith is God as First Truth, “by adhering to which we believe whatever is contained in the faith.”⁶⁷ This faith is one but is differentiated according to its instantiation in diverse subjects. Like any other habit, however, faith receives its species from the formal aspect of its object. Hence, while it is diversified according to its various subjects, it is one according to species. In other words, all believers participate in one and the same species of faith. This participation in the same species constitutes a certain unity among believers. When we consider the material object of faith, unity among believers again emerges: there is one faith since believers confess the same thing. As Sabra writes, “Considered as content, faith is also one because one and the same is believed by all; what is proposed for belief is one.”⁶⁸ Viewed from both its formal and material aspects, the object of faith establishes unity among the community of the faithful. Expressed in Pneumatological terms, the Holy Spirit gathers the community of believers into one; He brings into being a congregation of believers who

⁶⁴ Sabra, *Thomas Aquinas’ Vision of the Church*, p. 97.

⁶⁵ Luijten, *Sacramental Forgiveness as a Gift of God*, p.205.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 6: “[O]biectum enim formale fidei est veritas prima, cui inhaerendo credimus quaecumque sub fide continentur.”

⁶⁸ Sabra, *Thomas Aquinas’ Vision of the Church*, p. 101.

profess one and the same faith. Hence the unity of the Church is seen in terms of unity of faith. As Thomas writes, “The unity of the Church is especially on account of the unity of faith for the Church is nothing other than the congregation of the faithful.”⁶⁹ In the light of the foregoing, Dulles is correct in his observation that “If there were no individual believers, the faith of the Church would perish.”⁷⁰

Thomas makes other pertinent comments when dealing with the question of schism at *STh* II-II, q. 39. This question occurs in the context of his treatment of charity which is in us “by the infusion of the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the participation of Whom in us is created charity.”⁷¹ More proximately, schism is dealt with as one of the vices that are contrary to peace as the proper effect of charity.⁷² In his discussion of the question of schism, Thomas again mentions “the mutual connection or communion of the members of the Church,” that is to say, the unity of faith among the members of the Church, as one of the constitutive elements of the unity of the Church. In this context he also adds a second constitutive element, namely “the subordination of all the members of the Church to the one head,”⁷³ namely Christ. This understanding of the unity between Christ and the Church in terms of the unity of head and body is found elsewhere. Thus in the *Tertia Pars* Thomas states: “[G]race was in Christ not merely as in an individual, but also as in the Head

⁶⁹ *Super I Decr.*: “Unitas autem Ecclesiae est praecipue propter fidei unitatem: nam Ecclesia nihil est aliud quam congregatio fidelium.”

⁷⁰ Dulles, “The Ecclesial Dimension of Faith,” p. 425.

⁷¹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a 2: “[C]aritas non potest neque naturaliter nobis inesse, neque per vires naturales est acquisita, sed per infusionem spiritus sancti, qui est amor patris et filii, cuius participatio in nobis est ipsa caritas creata.”

⁷² See *STh* II-II, q. 29 a. 3.

⁷³ *STh* II-II, q. 39 a. 1: “Ecclesiae autem unitas in duobus attenditur, scilicet in connexione membrorum Ecclesiae ad invicem, seu communicatione; et iterum in ordine omnium membrorum Ecclesiae ad unum caput.”

of the whole Church, to Whom all are united, as members to a head, who constitute one mystical person.”⁷⁴ The interrelatedness of members of the Church depends on their union with Christ by grace.

Thomas continues his treatment of schism at *STh* II-II, q. 39 a. 1, by remarking that Christ has a viceregent in the Church, namely the Sovereign Pontiff. In other words, the Pope represents Christ here on earth. As such he constitutes a focal point for unity among the members of the Church. Thus in the statement that schismatics both refuse “to submit to the Sovereign Pontiff, and to hold communion with those members of the Church who acknowledge his supremacy,” unity in faith and papal authority go hand in hand.⁷⁵ A certain unity obtains between them. This point is further elaborated in Thomas’s discussion of episcopal power in the *Summa contra Gentiles*:

[T]he unity of the Church requires that all the faithful agree as to the faith. But about matters of faith it happens that questions arise. A diversity of pronouncements, of course, would divide the Church, if it were not preserved in unity by the pronouncement of one. Therefore, the unity of the Church demands that there be one who is at the head of the entire Church. But, manifestly, in its necessities Christ has not failed the Church which He loved and for which He shed His blood, since even of the synagogue the Lord says: ‘What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard

⁷⁴ *STh* III, q. 19 a. 4: “[I]n Christo non solum fuit gratia sicut in quodam homine singulari, sed sicut in capite totius Ecclesiae, cui omnes uniuntur sicut capiti membra, ex quibus constituitur mystice una persona.”

⁷⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 39 a. 1: “Hoc autem caput est ipse Christus, cuius vicem in Ecclesia gerit summus pontifex. Et ideo schismatici dicuntur qui subesse renuunt summo pontifici, et qui membris Ecclesiae ei subiectis communicare recusant.”

that I have not done to it?” (Isa. 5:4). Therefore, one must not doubt that by Christ’s ordering there is one who is at the head of the entire Church.⁷⁶

The fact that schism is dealt with in Thomas’s treatment of charity points to the fact that schism entails not only a rupture in the communion of faith but also a fragmentation of the unity of charity. Thus, the Church can be viewed not only as a unity of faith but also as a unity of love. This interpretation finds support elsewhere in Thomas’s writings. In his commentary on St John’s Gospel, Thomas states that we are united to Christ through the Holy Spirit “by a union of faith and love,”⁷⁷ and through the Holy Spirit “we become members of the Church.”⁷⁸ Elsewhere, in his commentary of the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians, Thomas talks of a twofold union that is necessary for uniting the members of the Church: “[O]ne is interior, that is, that they agree by faith in regard to the intellect by believing the same things, and by love in the will by loving the same things. Hence he says, agree with one another, i.e., agree in regard to matters of faith, and love the same things with

⁷⁶ *ScG* IV, c. 76 [3]: “Ad unitatem Ecclesiae requiritur quod omnes fideles in fide convenient. Circa vero ea quae fidei sunt, contingit quaestiones moveri. Per diversitatem autem sententiarum divideretur Ecclesia, nisi in unitate per unius sententiam conservaretur. Exigitur igitur ad unitatem Ecclesiae conservandam quod sit unus qui toti Ecclesiae praesit. Manifestum est autem, quod Christus Ecclesiae in necessariis non defecit, quam dilexit, et pro qua sanguinem suum fudit: cum et de synagoga dicatur per dominum: *quid ultra debui facere vineae meae, et non feci?* Isaiae 5-4. Non est igitur dubitandum quin ex ordinatione Christi unus toti Ecclesiae praesit.” For a discussion of the papal office as guaranteeing the visible unity of the Church, see Bonino, “La place du pape dans l’Église” pp. 404-9.

⁷⁷ *In Joh* VI, lectio VII [973]: “[U]nione fidei et caritatis.”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* : “[E]fficimur membra Ecclesiae.”

the affection of charity.”⁷⁹ In the *Summa*, when discussing the different duties or states in the Church, Thomas again asserts that the unity of the Church results from the unity of faith and charity while this time adding the mark of mutual service.⁸⁰ Bearing in mind that faith and charity are a function of grace, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the contention that Thomas’s ecclesiology is in effect “a social pneumatology” becomes apparent.⁸¹

Pneumatology is also constitutive of the Church’s non-errancy with regard to the transmission of the faith throughout the course of history. It is clear that for Thomas the Church as a whole cannot err in matters of faith because she is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, as already explained.⁸² It is in the light of this understanding concerning the sanctifying force of the Holy Spirit that the following assertion at *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 10, is to be read: “[T]here should be but one faith of the whole Church ... and this could not be secured unless any question of faith that may arise be decided by him who presides over the whole Church, so that the whole Church may hold firmly to his decision.”⁸³ In other words, the function of the

⁷⁹ *Ad II Cor* XIII, lectio III [539]: “Est autem duplex unio necessaria ad membra Ecclesiae unienda. Una est interior, ut scilicet idem sapiant per fidem, quantum ad intellectum, idem credendo, et per amorem, quantum ad affectum, idem diligendo. Et ideo dicit, **idem sapite**, id est idem sentiatis de fide, et idem diligatis affectu charitatis.”

⁸⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 183 a. 2 ad 1: “[D]iversitas statuum et officiorum non impedit Ecclesiae unitatem, quae perficitur per unitatem fidei et caritatis et mutuae subministrationis.”

⁸¹ See Thomas F. O’Meara, O.P., “Theology of Church,” in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. by van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow, p. 314.

⁸² See *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 9 *sed contra*: “[N]on potest errare, quia spiritu sancto gubernatur, qui est spiritus veritatis.” See also III, q. 66 a. 10 *sed contra*.

⁸³ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 10: “[U]na fides debet esse totius Ecclesiae ... Quod servari non posset nisi quaestio fidei de fide exorta determinaretur per eum qui toti Ecclesiae praeest, ut sic eius sententia a tota Ecclesia firmiter teneatur.”

papal office in safeguarding unity in matters of faith is sustained by the more fundamental action of the Holy Spirit Who governs the Church. It is interesting moreover in the light of our earlier observations concerning the context in which Thomas discusses schism, namely in connection with his treatment of charity and more proximately of peace, that the Scriptural text informing Thomas's argument here and which he cites is 1 Cor 1:10: "That you all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you."⁸⁴ Preservation of the unity of charity is paramount and charity is nothing other than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit constitutes the members of the Church as a unity of faith and ensures the non-errancy of the Church in transmitting the faith from one generation to the next. Since the Church, thanks to the working of the Holy Spirit, safeguards the articles of faith, which provide the first principles of graced reason's activity, we can speak of the ecclesial character of faith. In so far as the individual believer's personal faith concurs with what is proclaimed by the Church, it participates in the non-errancy of the Church's faith that is assured by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. The articles of the symbol and the other doctrines formulated by the Church furnish the first principles on the basis of which Christian reason unfolds. They condition the directionality of reason from its very wellsprings, presuming that the faith in question is a living faith, that is to say, a faith informed by charity. The unity of faith and of charity – as well as of hope – that constitutes the unity of the Church therefore furnishes the context in which Christian reason unfolds in the direction of ultimate Beatitude. We can therefore speak of an ecclesial hermeneutics in Thomas so long as we do not divorce his theology of the Church from his Trinitarian theology, his Christology, his Pneumatology, and his theology of grace.

⁸⁴ Ibid.: "[I]dipsum dicatis omnes, et non sint in vobis schismata."

While the focus of this chapter and the next is on the role of faith in establishing a hermeneutics of objectivity, that is to say, the right directionality of reason, chapters eight and nine will concentrate on charity in this regard. The initial deliberations of this section have shown that for Thomas the Church's dogmatic formulations possess the same content as Holy Scripture. Thus, the various creedal expressions proposed to all the faithful transport them into the heart of scriptural revelation. This point is an important one as it means that in accepting the articles of the creed we become recipients of God's revelation in Scripture. Faith is at once scriptural in character as well as ecclesial and Pneumatological. This section has outlined Thomas's teaching concerning the non-errancy of the Church's dogmatic formulations, a non-errancy that she enjoys on account of her being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. It is the same Holy Spirit who gathers together a congregation of believers whose members profess one and the same faith and who are united in one and the same hope and love. In this regard, Thomas F. O'Meara's words are worth quoting: "Ultimately, Aquinas' fundamental theology of Christianity, the ground of ecclesiology, was terrestrial, an economy of grace in people."⁸⁵

Grace is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Grace, however, is not only Pneumatological in character, it is also Christological – a point highlighted in chapter four. Thus, while Thomas does not make this point, the highly synthetic nature of his work suggests that the Church is the congregation of those who seek to imitate Christ in all He did and said in the course of His earthly ministry. Since grace draws the believer into the form of Christ's mysteries, it seems reasonable to extrapolate and to suggest that the Church, as sanctified by the Holy Spirit, furnishes the theological context in which Christ's mysteries shape us from within. Moreover, as we saw in our consideration of the divine missions,

⁸⁵ O'Meara, "Theology of Church," p. 319.

wherever one Person of the Holy Trinity resides, there reside all three Persons. Hence the Church is not only Pneumatologically constituted, she is by extension Christological and Trinitarian in character. The unity of the faithful in faith and love, whereby believers are united in knowing and loving God, is the fruit of the missions of the Son and the Spirit. It seems reasonable to infer that Thomas's ecclesiology points to the important role that the Church, as Pneumatologically constituted, plays in shaping the knowing and willing of believers. In other words, it possesses a hermeneutical significance.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has concentrated on Thomas's construal of the nature of faith. In elaborating his doctrine concerning the nature of faith Thomas pays due attention on the one hand to the transcendence of God and on the other hand to the fact that, in the words of Bede McGregor, O.P., "The life of grace and faith are lived « humano modo »."⁸⁶ A proper understanding of Thomas's teaching concerning the First Truth as the formal object of faith takes us back to Thomas's treatment of the divine simplicity in the *Prima Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* as well as to his analysis of how the human intellect reaches understanding by way of composition and division. The human intellect can know only things that are complex and it knows them by way of composition and division. The First Truth, since it does not admit any complexity, cannot be the object of human cognition. God by His very nature lies beyond the powers of human cognition to grasp according to His own mode of being. In keeping with the general principle that what is received is received according to the mode of

⁸⁶ Bede McGregor, O.P., "Revelation, Creeds and Salvific Mission," in *La doctrine de la révélation divine de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, ed. by Léon Elders, S.V.D. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), p. 198.

being of that which receives,⁸⁷ the act of faith must be proportioned to the cognitional capacity of the human intellect. As McGregor states the point, “If the act of faith is to be truly a human act it cannot bypass the normal processes of the mind and will that culminates [sic] in an act of judgement.”⁸⁸ The material object of faith, proportioned to human subjectivity, is propositional in its constitution. Rejection of this contention logically entails “an extrinsicist understanding of revelation.”⁸⁹

The Christian however is not bound by propositional form in which the articles of faith are expressed in the symbol. On the contrary, the articles of faith bring the believer into contact with the reality that they express. By their means we come into contact with the living God as He is, albeit in a manner proportioned to our mode of being. Although he cannot know God as He is in Himself, the propositions in which the doctrines of faith are formulated mediate God’s very own Truth to the believer, thereby elevating his cognitional capacity beyond what is possible for it when unaided by grace. The act of faith therefore possesses a profound epistemic significance: the act of faith places the believer on a higher epistemic plane than that occupied by the non-believer. For by faith the believer’s intellect is strengthened by God’s own Truth. We have argued, moreover, that the material objects of faith assist the believer in his journey towards ultimate Beatitude and that they therefore possess a significance for the life of practical reason. In other words, faith and morality are intimately connected in Thomas’s scheme of things.

It is a fact that the material objects of the faith, on the basis of which the reason of the believer unfolds, have developed throughout the centuries. In other words, doctrine has

⁸⁷ *STh* I, q. 79 a. 6: “Quod enim recipitur in aliquo, recipitur in eo secundum modum recipientis.” See also *STh* I, q. 89 a. 4; *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 2; *STh* III, q. 54 a. 2 ad 1; *De ver* q. 2 a. 2 ad 5; *De ver* q. 20 a. 4 ad 1.

⁸⁸ McGregor, O.P., “Revelation, Creeds and Salvific Mission,” p. 198.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

evolved over the course of time. Thomas argues that the substance of the articles of faith has not changed since what is believed in later ages is implicitly contained in the faith of those who lived in earlier times. This development in doctrine furnishes another instance of how God communicates to us in a way that is proportioned to our rational nature. Human reason is discursive and its knowledge develops with the passage of time. Likewise in the case of faith: as time progresses our knowledge of it evolves. Notwithstanding this fact, however, the passage of time might well imperil the transmission of the faith in its integrity if faith were merely a human construct. The integrity of the faith is however guaranteed by the fact that the Church is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Thomas's ecclesiology is therefore concerned, among other things, with the integrity of the material object of faith. Since the articles of faith provide the first principles on the basis of which graced reason operates, we suggest that Thomas's ecclesiology therefore possesses a hermeneutical significance: it furnishes the context in which the Holy Trinity preserves the conditions for optimal intellectual objectivity. This intellectual objectivity requires a rightly ordered will, as chapter three has argued, and so, faith must necessarily be informed by charity, which strengthens the will.

Chapters eight and nine will further analyze the hermeneutical significance of charity. In terms of the discussion of this chapter, it is interesting to note that Thomas not only refers to the Church as a unity of faith, he also describes it as a unity of charity. While he does not elaborate on this description, we can clearly say that the Church establishes the conditions for right willing since the precept concerning love of one's neighbor is included in the precept regarding love of God⁹⁰ and charity is "a kind of friendship."⁹¹ Since charity is the form of all the other virtues, moreover, it is fundamentally constitutive of the form of life proper to the *congregatio fidelium* which is at once a unity of faith and a unity of charity. The

⁹⁰ See *STh* II-II, q. 44 a. 2.

⁹¹ *STh* II-II, q. 44 a. 3: "[C]aritas, sicut supra dictum est, est amicitia quaedam."

interinvolvement of intellect and will, as delineated in chapter three, whereby the will influences intellectual perception and the direction in which reason unfolds and whereby the will therefore possesses a certain hermeneutical force, gives further impetus to the claim that Thomas's ecclesiology has a hermeneutical significance. Thomas, let it be clear, does not make this point explicitly. It does however arguably flow from the elements of his ecclesiology discussed in this chapter. This point is supported by the Pneumatological and Trinitarian character of the Church wherein the knowing and willing of the faithful is shaped according to the example of Christ incarnate. Again, while this argument is not explicit in Thomas's theology of the Church, it is nevertheless implicit.

This chapter has been concerned with the objective reference of the act of faith in both its formal and material aspects and with the role of the Church here on earth in ensuring the veracity of the material object of faith. Even with this focus, however, it is impossible to avoid reference to the human subject of faith. The next chapter will however focus its attention on this aspect, that is to say, on the individual act of faith and on the gifts of the Holy Spirit that always accompany it. As such, it will highlight the epistemic transformation wrought by faith in the individual believer.

CHAPTER VII

BEYOND THE LIMITS OF NATURAL REASON

Chapter six dealt with the object of faith under its formal and material aspects as well as with the guarantee of the material object of faith by means of the Church sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This chapter turns towards the individual subject in order to offer an account of the epistemic transformation wrought by faith in him as well as by three of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that are infused along with faith: understanding, knowledge, and counsel. In other words, it is concerned with faith, the theological virtue that strengthens the intellect, and with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that pertain to the intellect/reason in both its speculative and practical aspects.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, we might recall, are habits that perfect the intellect and will. They exalt the operation of these faculties, thereby rendering them more amenable to the divine inspiration. Without the Gifts we would possess the theological virtues imperfectly and so these virtues would not be sufficient to direct us to our supernatural end. The analogy of the intellect's understanding of first principles and the knowledge that results from reason's discursive activity that has its origin and term in these principles serves to elucidate the nature of the Gifts of understanding and knowledge as also does Thomas's distinction between *intellectus* and *ratio*. A disanalogy with natural knowledge nevertheless obtains for while natural knowledge results from the discursive activity of reason, the Gift of knowledge involves no discursiveness. It is instinctual on account of reason's "connaturalization" with God's own knowledge.¹

¹ See O'Meara, "Virtues in the Theology of Aquinas," p. 269.

The Gifts of understanding and knowledge relate primarily to speculative matters and only by extension to practical affairs. A further Gift, namely counsel, which principally regards reason in its practical activity, is therefore required. In contrast to the Gifts of understanding and knowledge, which pertain to the virtue faith, the Gift of counsel pertains to the virtue of prudence. Exegesis of Thomas's account of the Gift of counsel reveals its intimate connection with divine providence and with predestination. This predestination is however the predestination to be conformed to the image of Christ, a point that links the treatment of counsel with the notion of *imitatio Christi*, discussed in chapter four, whereby the believer shapes his knowing and willing according to the example of Christ. The fact that the Gift of counsel pertains to the virtue of prudence also provides a link with the next two chapters since right willing is intrinsic to prudence while charity elevates the will.

Before dealing with the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, and counsel, however, we continue our examination of Thomas's account of faith. Faith, as a function of grace, perfects the human intellect and orders man towards his supernatural end, namely ultimate Beatitude. It sets us on the way to final union with God. Since it grants the believer a participation in the divine life, it follows that eternal life begins in us by faith in this life before being realized in the next. In order to explicate this idea Thomas, as we shall see, has recourse to Heb 11, 1 which defines faith as "*the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not.*"² He interprets the notion of faith as the substance of things to be hoped for as meaning that faith contains virtually all things to be hoped for and which will be realized in eternal life. In other words, faith makes the reality of ultimate Beatitude exist in us in an inchoate manner which implies that the full actualization of final Beatitude exists in potency in the believer. As this potency is realized faith can be said to increase. Before discussing the

² *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1: "[E]st autem fides substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium."

notion of degrees of faith, however, it will be useful to complete our account of the nature of the individual act of faith.

1. The individual act of faith

At the beginning of his response to the question as to whether it is necessary for salvation to believe anything above the natural reason, Thomas states the following: “Wherever one nature is subordinate to another, we find that two things concur towards the perfection of the lower nature, one of which is in respect of that nature’s proper movement, while the other is in respect of the movement of the higher nature.”³ Thomas elucidates this point with the example of the sea: by virtue of its own movement it inclines towards the centre of the earth, while according to the influence of the moon it moves round the centre by ebb and flow. By means of this image Thomas attempts to communicate the interaction of grace and nature, an interaction that does not annul human nature but rather perfects it by directing it to a higher end than it is possible to attain by means of its natural powers. Here we encounter the question of the two ends of man, namely natural and supernatural. Since created rational nature is alone in this universe in apprehending the universal notion of the good and of being, “it alone is immediately related to the universal principle of being.”⁴ On account of its relation to the universal good and principle of being, that is to say, the divine

³ *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 3: “[I]n omnibus naturis ordinatis invenitur quod ad perfectionem naturae inferioris duo concurrunt, unum quidem quod est secundum proprium motum; aliud autem quod est secundum motum superioris naturae.”

⁴ *Ibid.* The full text of the relevant passage runs as follows: “Sola autem natura rationalis creata habet immediatum ordinem ad Deum. Quia ceterae creaturae non attingunt ad aliquid universale, sed solum ad aliquid particulare, participant divinam bonitatem vel in essendo tantum, sicut inanimata, vel etiam in vivendo et cognoscendo singularia, sicut plantae et animalia, natura autem rationalis, inquantum cognoscit universalem boni et entis rationem, habet immediatum ordinem ad universale essendi principium.”

goodness, man's perfection consists not only in what belongs to him in respect of his nature but also in that which he acquires "through a supernatural participation of Divine goodness."⁵ In Thomas's depiction of the interaction between the human and the divine we see that natural reason must be taken beyond its native capacity in order to achieve perfection: "Consequently the perfection of the rational creature consists not only in what belongs to it in respect of its nature, but also in that which it acquires through a supernatural participation of Divine goodness."⁶ Hence we can say that the perfection of human reason, precisely as human reason, requires that it be divinized. Here we witness a repetition of the teaching we encountered when examining Thomas's teaching concerning grace – naturally enough, since faith is a function of grace: man naturally desires ultimate Beatitude but this Beatitude lies beyond his natural power to attain; God alone by His grace can confer this capacity.

Ultimate Beatitude or eternal life, however, has its beginning in this life by faith. In explicating this notion, Thomas has recourse to Heb 11:1, which describes faith as "*the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not.*"⁷ Naturally, the word of Scripture is decisive in Thomas's deliberations. As Thomas succinctly puts it, "The authority of the Apostle suffices."⁸ It makes sense therefore to turn in the first place to Thomas's commentary on the letter to the Hebrews, reflection upon which has obviously informed his treatment of faith in the *Summa*, as will be seen.

Thomas acknowledges that the notion of 'substance' in the definition of faith can admit of various explanations. He in fact presents two possibilities: 'substance' in this context

⁵ Ibid.: "[E]x quadam supernaturali participatione divinae bonitatis."

⁶ Ibid.: "Perfectio ergo rationalis creaturae non solum consistit in eo quod ei competit secundum suam naturam, sed etiam in eo quod ei attribuitur ex quadam supernaturali participatione divinae bonitatis."

⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1 obj. 1: "[E]st autem fides substantia sperandarum rerum, argumentum non apparentium"

⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1 sed contra: "[S]ufficit auctoritas apostoli."

can be understood in either causal or essential terms. The first causal explanation appeals to the notion of merit, “for from the fact that a person makes his intellect captive and submissive to the things of faith, he deserves some day to see the things he hopes for.”⁹ According to this understanding, the vision of God in eternity is the reward of faith. A second causal understanding of ‘substance’ as applied to faith proposes that faith makes what really lies in the future to be possessed in the present.¹⁰ Thomas simply mentions but does not linger on the causal understanding of faith before proceeding to a lengthier exposition of the essential understanding that we have already met in the *Summa*. He obviously finds this understanding to be better than the others. According to this understanding, it is “as if faith is the substance, i.e., the essence of things to be hoped for.”¹¹ Thomas explains the signification of the term ‘substance’ at play here in the same Aristotelian terms that we will encounter in the *Summa*: “[F]aith is ordained to things to be hoped for, being, as it were, a beginning in which the whole is, as it were, virtually contained, as conclusions in principles.”¹² He also employs the same analogy as in the *Summa*, an analogy taken from the realm of pedagogy: in learning a liberal science one must first accept its principles on faith from a teacher. We also meet the idea that an entire science is virtually contained in its proper principles “as conclusions are

⁹ *In Heb* c. XI, lectio 1 [557]: “Ex hoc enim, quod captivat et submittit intellectum suum his quae sunt fidei, meretur quod aliquando perveniat ad videndum hoc quod sperat.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.* : “Alio modo quasi per suam proprietatem praesentialiter faciat, quod id quod creditur futurum in re, aliquo modo iam habeatur dummodo credat in Deum.”

¹¹ *Ibid.*: “Alio modo exponi potest substantia essentialiter, quasi fides sit substantia, id est, essentia rerum sperandarum.”

¹² *Ibid.*: “[F]ides ordinatur ad res sperandas quasi quoddam inchoativum, in quo totum quasi essentialiter continetur, sicut conclusiones in principiis.”

contained in their principles, and an effect in its cause.”¹³ Consequently, a person who grasps the principles of a science possesses its substance. Thus, for example, one who comprehends the principles of geometry has the substance of geometry.

The example of geometry in a discussion of faith, in which is virtually contained our ultimate happiness, leads Thomas to offer this striking illustration of the point he has been trying to impress upon the reader: “[I]f geometry were the substance of happiness, a person who possessed the principles of geometry would, in a sense, have the substance of happiness.”¹⁴ Faith however tells us the ultimate happiness consists in the vision of God in eternity,¹⁵ a point that Thomas repeats several times in the section of his commentary that we are outlining. If we are to reach this happiness “it is necessary that we believe the principles of that knowledge” which is the full vision of God in eternity. These principles are furnished by the articles of faith “which contain the summary of this knowledge.”¹⁶

In the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas takes substance to mean “the first beginning of a thing, especially when the whole subsequent thing is virtually contained in the first beginning.”¹⁷ This interpretation of the term ‘substance’ once again has its basis in

¹³ Ibid.: “[I]n illis principiis quodammodo continetur tota scientia, sicut conclusiones in praemissis, et effectus in causa.”

¹⁴ Ibid.: “[S]i geometria esset essentia beatitudinis, qui haberet principia geometriae, haberet quodammodo substantiam beatitudinis.”

¹⁵ Ibid.: “Ipsa ergo plena visio Dei est essentia beatitudinis.”

¹⁶ Ibid.: “Et ideo si volumus ad hoc pervenire, oportet ut credamus principia istius cognitionis. Et haec sunt articuli fidei qui continent totam summam huius scientiae.”

¹⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1: “[P]rima inchoatio cuiuscumque rei, et maxime quando tota res sequens continetur virtute in primo principio.” See also *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1 ad 1: “[S]ubstantia non sumitur hic secundum quod est genus generalissimum contra alia genera divisum, sed secundum quod in quolibet genere invenitur quaedam similitudo

Aristotelian metaphysics, according to which “the first thing in a genus contains the others virtually and is said to be the substance thereof.”¹⁸ This point drawn from Aristotelian metaphysics allows Thomas to refer, in the next step of his argument, to the first self-evident principles of science as its substance since the whole of science is virtually contained in them. Since faith has its own first-principles, namely the articles of faith, which mediate God’s very own Truth to human beings in a manner proportioned to human cognition, it is said to be “the *substance of things to be hoped for*.” The assent of faith “contains virtually all things to be hoped for.”¹⁹ In other words, the final end of human existence, namely the beatific vision, is virtually contained in faith. Thus, as Paul A. Macdonald, Jr., remarks, “while faith indeed constitutes a radically imperfect mode of epistemic access to God, it nevertheless “carries” our minds all the way to God, and consequently prepares our minds for the full knowledge or direct “vision” of God that we are promised in the life to come.”²⁰ Cessario explains in this regard that “Faith sets the members of Christ’s Body on the road to beatitude, the full and joyful possession of God that the Christian Gospel both announces and promises to fulfil.”²¹

The understanding of faith as a substance in which is contained virtually that ultimate happiness that consists in the supernatural vision of God implies some kind of potentiality:

substantiae, prout scilicet primum in quolibet genere, continens in se alia virtute, dicitur esse substantia illorum.”

¹⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1 ad 1: “[P]rimum in quolibet genere, continens in se alia virtute, dicitur esse substantia illorum.”

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: “[D]icitur fides esse substantia rerum sperandarum, quia scilicet prima inchoatio rerum sperandarum in nobis est per assensum fidei, quae virtute continet omnes res sperandas.” See also *Comp Theol* I, ch. 2: “[Q]uasi iam in nobis sperandas res, idest futuram beatitudinem, per modum cuiusdam inchoationis subsistere faciens.”

²⁰ Paul A. Macdonald, Jr., “The Eschatological Character of our Knowledge of God,” *Modern Theology* 22 (2006), p. 264.

²¹ Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life*, p. 134.

just as the principles of science can be unfolded in pursuit of the fullness of science, so too can what is contained virtually in faith be gradually realized, albeit in keeping with the mode of human nature. Thus, comments Thomas, “man acquires a share of this learning, not indeed all at once, but little by little, according to the mode of his nature: and everyone who learns thus must needs believe, in order that he may acquire science in a perfect degree.”²² Here we witness Thomas’s recourse to Aristotle’s contention that it is necessary for the acquisition of science that the learner should take things on trust from a teacher.²³ Thomas makes this same point in his commentary on St. John’s Gospel: “[I]n the sciences, no one acquires wisdom unless he first believes what is said by his teacher.”²⁴ The teacher must understand the intelligible principles of everything contained within the scope of the science to be taught. At the outset of the teaching enterprise the pupil does not understand the principles of whatever he is taught; this understanding must await a greater grasp of the science. Hence the necessity for belief on the part of the learner. Indeed, as Thomas remarks in *De veritate*, the learner “could not acquire mastery of the science in any other way unless he accepted without proof those things which he is taught at first and the arguments for which he cannot then understand.”²⁵

The analogy between the acquisition of the knowledge of faith and the attainment of Aristotelian science, however, has its shortcomings. In the case of Aristotelian science the

²² *STh* II-II, q. 2 a. 3: “Huius autem disciplinae fit homo particeps non statim, sed successive, secundum modum suae naturae. Omnis autem talis addiscens oportet quod credat, ad hoc quod ad perfectam scientiam perveniat.”

²³ Aristotle, *De Sophisticis Elenchis*, II (165b3).

²⁴ *In Joh* V, lectio IV [771]: “[I]n scientiis nullus ad sapientiam pervenit, nisi prius fidem adhibeat dictis a magistro.”

²⁵ *De ver* q. 14 a. 10: “[O]portet addiscentem credere: et aliter ad perfectam scientiam pervenire non posset, nisi scilicet supponeret ea quae sibi in principio traduntur, quorum rationes tunc capere non potest.”

teacher functions as it were as an instrument by means of which the disciple obtains knowledge which he is naturally capable of acquiring by the light of his own intelligence. Human teaching is an external aid for the disciple's intellect. In contrast, divine instruction imparted by faith is effected interiorly; it is not only an aid that comes to us from without but, as Duroux writes, is "*an intrinsic elevation of the spirit to a higher order.*"²⁶ To say in the case of Aristotelian science that the disciple acquires knowledge which he is naturally capable of acquiring by dint of his native intellectual capacity points to the fact that the knowledge of natural science is virtually present in the innate natural principles into which the judgment of reason can be resolved. In the case of faith however there are no innate natural principles to which the articles of faith can be reduced. The determination of faith is by way of teaching and this fact requires an implicit faith on the part of an individual.²⁷ With this act of faith, the articles then function as first principles of reasoning. Just as the conclusions of a science are virtually contained in its principles so too is the conclusion of the act of faith, that is to say, the end to which it looks forward, namely ultimate Beatitude, contained within it.

The explication of the act of faith by way of analogy with the acquisition of Aristotelian science suggests that faith is narrative in nature, that is to say, it unfolds in the

²⁶ Duroux, *La psychologie de la foi chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 192: "[L]e disciple en sciences humaines ... se sert de l'enseignement de son maître comme d'un instrument pour obtenir une évidence dont il est naturellement capable en vertu de la lumière de son esprit. *L'enseignement humain est exclusivement extérieur ; et vient se mettre au service d'une faculté naturelle.* Chez le croyant au contraire, l'instruction divine est *principalement intérieure*, car elle n'est pas seulement une aide apportée du dehors à la nature, mais *une élévation intrinsèque* de l'esprit à un ordre supérieur."

²⁷ See *In III Sent*, d. 25 a. 2 qca. 4 ad 1: "[N]on est simile de scientia et fide: quia non sunt nobis innata aliqua principia naturalia ad quae possint reduci articuli fidei; sed tota determinatio fidei est in nobis per doctrinam; et ideo oportet in cognitione hominis habere fidem implicitam."

history of the individual and as such admits of increase. Before turning to the dynamics of increase of faith in the next section, however, it is important to note that our account of the act of faith remains limited since our concern is with living faith and living faith must be informed by charity. While it is possible for a person to possess lifeless faith, living faith involves the dynamics of interinvolvement between intellect and will that we discussed in chapter three. Since grace perfects human nature and since in human nature there obtains an interinvolvement of intellect and will, the perfection of faith requires the concomitant perfection of charity – and *vice versa*. Chapters eight and nine will elaborate further the implications of charity for the life of human intelligence that operates in the light of faith and thereby complement and complete the considerations of this present chapter.

At this point we turn our attention to the case of faith in this regard, leaving increase of charity until chapters eight and nine. We will focus on faith with respect to its participation in the believing subject since, as will be briefly noted, this is the respect in which it makes sense to speak of increase in faith. The understanding of first principles and natural knowledge provides both an analogy with the notion of increase in faith and knowledge by grace. Appeal to the analogy of first principles and to the fact that some people enjoy a greater grasp of first principles than do others allows us to appreciate how in the realm of faith one person can possess a greater understanding of the articles of faith than another. Mention of understanding of the principles of faith and of the knowledge that is based on these principles brings us to a discussion of the Gift of understanding. Just as natural knowledge develops out of the understanding of first principles, so too does the knowledge afforded by grace have its point of departure in the articles of faith. A discussion of Thomas's teaching concerning the Gift of knowledge therefore follows the treatment of the Gift of understanding. The Gifts of understanding and knowledge, however, relate principally to theoretical matters and only by extension to practical matters. A further Gift which relates

primarily to the operation of reason in its practical activity is therefore required. Exegesis of Thomas's account of this Gift, namely the Gift of counsel, entails reference to divine providence and to predestination. In effect, the Gift of counsel is a manifestation of God's predestining love whereby we are enabled to reason correctly about those things which are necessary for the attainment of ultimate Beatitude.

2. Increase of faith

In discussing increase of faith Thomas first of all notes that there is a sense in which there is no diversity of faith among believers, that is to say, there is a sense in which one believer cannot be said to have more or less faith than another believer. This sense concerns the object of faith considered under its formal aspect. This formal aspect "is one and simple, namely the First Truth."²⁸ It is impossible for one man to enjoy greater faith than another in this respect since the faith "is specifically one in all."²⁹ When considered under its material aspect, that is to say, with regard to "the things that are proposed as the matter of our belief,"³⁰ the faith of one man can indeed be greater than that of another. For since the things that are presented to us for belief are many and can be received more or less explicitly on the part of individuals, it is possible for one man to believe explicitly more things than another. Consequently, "faith can be greater in one man on account of its being more explicit."³¹ It is not this sense of increase in faith, however, that is of interest to our epistemic concerns since the focus of this sense is on the object of faith. In contrast, our focus is on the individual subject who has been granted the virtue of faith.

²⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4: "[U]num et simplex scilicet veritas prima."

²⁹ *Ibid.*: "[E]st una specie in omnibus."

³⁰ *Ibid.*: "[E]a quae materialiter credenda proponuntur."

³¹ *Ibid.*: "[I]n uno potest esse maior fides secundum maiorem fidei explicationem."

In considering faith “from the point of view of its participation in the subject,”³² Thomas reminds us that “the act of faith proceeds both from the intellect and the will.”³³ The notion of increase in faith comes into play in so far as the intellect is concerned “on account of its greater certitude and firmness”³⁴ and in so far as the will is concerned “on account of the subject’s greater promptitude, devotion, or confidence.”³⁵ Thus, although faith requires complete submission to the First Truth, “some submit with greater certitude and devotion than others.”³⁶ As we will see below in an examination of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, a sure grasp of what is proposed for belief is afforded by the Gift of understanding (*intellectus*) while it belongs to the Gift of knowledge (*scientia*) to form a certain and right judgment regarding the same.³⁷ Certitude of faith is not acquired by human effort but is rather received as a Gift from the Holy Spirit. The certitude in question pertains however to living faith, in other words, to a faith informed by charity. Hence Thomas’s appeal to devotion in his discussion of the notion of increase in faith for charity causes devotion – while devotion also gives sustenance to charity just as “all friendship is safeguarded and increased by the practice and consideration of friendly deeds.”³⁸ There thus obtains a relationship of reciprocity

³² Ibid.: “[S]ecundum participationem subiecti.”

³³ Ibid.: “[A]ctus fidei procedit et ex intellectu et ex voluntate.”

³⁴ Ibid.: “[P]ropter maiorem certitudinem et firmitatem.”

³⁵ Ibid.: “[P]ropter maiorem promptitudinem seu devotionem vel confidentiam.”

³⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4 ad 2.

³⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 1: “[A]d hoc quod intellectus humanus perfecte assentiat veritati fidei duo requiruntur. Quorum unum est quod sane capiat ea quae proponuntur, quod pertinet ad donum intellectus ... Aliud autem est ut habeat certum et rectum iudicium de eis, discernendo scilicet credenda non credendis. Et ad hoc necessarium est donum scientiae.”

³⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 2 ad 2: “[Q]uaelibet amicitia conservatur et augetur per amicabilem operum exercitium et meditationem.”

between charity and devotion. In this relationship priority is nevertheless accorded to charity since charity causes devotion “inasmuch as love makes one ready to serve one’s friend.”³⁹

Thomas deals with devotion in the general context of his treatment of the virtue of justice as one of the two interior acts of religion (prayer being the second). Religion “denotes properly a relation to God”⁴⁰ while devotion signifies “the will to do readily what concerns the service of God.”⁴¹ This will to do what concerns the service of God is fostered by meditation “in so far as through meditation man conceives the thought of surrendering himself to God’s service.”⁴² Thomas posits a twofold consideration that leads one to surrender oneself to God’s service. The first pertains to “God’s goodness and loving kindness,” and awakens love, “which is the proximate cause of devotion.”⁴³ The second pertains to “man’s own shortcomings, on account of which he needs to lean on God”⁴⁴ and precludes presumption, a sin against the theological virtue of hope which prevents one from surrendering oneself to God on account of relying too much on one’s own powers or

³⁹ Ibid.: “[C]aritas et devotionem causat, inquantum ex amore aliquis redditur promptus ad serviendum amico.”

⁴⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 81 a. 1: “[R]eligio proprie importat ordinem ad Deum.”

⁴¹ *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 1: “[D]evotio nihil aliud esse videtur quam voluntas quaedam prompte tradendi se ad ea quae pertinent ad Dei famulatum.”

⁴² *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 3: “[N]ecesse est quod meditatio sit devotionis causa, inquantum scilicet per meditationem homo concipit quod se tradat divino obsequio.”

⁴³ Ibid.: “Una quidem quae est ex parte divinae bonitatis et beneficiorum ipsius ... Et haec consideratio excitat dilectionem, quae est proxima devotionis causa.”

⁴⁴ Ibid.: “Alia vero est ex parte hominis considerantis suos defectus, ex quibus indiget ut Deo innitatur ... Et haec consideratio excludit praesumptionem, per quam aliquis impeditur ne Deo se subiiciat.”

presuming inordinately on God.⁴⁵ While Thomas does not go into great detail with regard to consideration of God's goodness and loving kindness, the following passage is striking:

Matters concerning the Godhead are, in themselves, the strongest incentive to love and consequently to devotion, because God is supremely lovable. Yet such is the weakness of the human mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of Divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of the Preface,⁴⁶ *that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible*. Wherefore matters relating to Christ's humanity are the chief incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See *STh* II-II, q. 21 a. 1: "[P]raesumptio videtur importare quandam immoderantiam spei. Spei autem obiectum est bonum arduum possibile. Possibile autem est aliquid homini dupliciter, uno modo, per propriam virtutem; alio modo, non nisi per virtutem divinam. Circa utramque autem spem per immoderantiam potest esse praesumptio. Nam circa spem per quam aliquis de propria virtute confidit, attenditur praesumptio ex hoc quod aliquis tendit in aliquid ut sibi possibile quod suam facultatem excedit, secundum quod dicitur Iudith VI, *praesumentes de se humilias*. Et talis praesumptio opponitur virtuti magnanimitatis, quae medium tenet in huiusmodi spe. Circa spem autem qua aliquis inhaeret divinae potentiae, potest per immoderantiam esse praesumptio in hoc quod aliquis tendit in aliquod bonum ut possibile per virtutem et misericordiam divinam quod possibile non est, sicut cum aliquis sperat se veniam obtinere sine poenitentia, vel gloriam sine meritis. Haec autem praesumptio est proprie species peccati in spiritum sanctum, quia scilicet per huiusmodi praesumptionem tollitur vel contemnitur adiutorium spiritus sancti per quod homo revocatur a peccato."

⁴⁶ Preface for Christmastide.

⁴⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 83 a. 3 ad 2: "[E]a quae sunt divinitatis sunt secundum se maxime excitantia dilectionem, et per consequens devotionem, quia Deus est super omnia diligendus. Sed ex debilitate mentis humanae est quod sicut indiget manuduci ad cognitionem divinatorum, ita ad dilectionem, per aliqua sensibilia nobis nota. Inter quae

Considerations concerning the triune God and on the Incarnation thus enjoy a place of special importance in inciting love for God's goodness and loving kindness. Any human reflections concerning the triune God, such as those outlined in chapter two, of course fall infinitely short of the reality of their object. Such reflections, moreover, would not be possible if God had not become man in Jesus Christ. The idea of Christ's humanity as coming to the aid of the human mind in all its weakness, that is to say, as "a guiding hand" (*manuductio*) by which our minds are led "not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of Divine things,"⁴⁸ connects with our discussion of Thomas's Christology in chapter four; so also does mention of Christ's humanity as leading us to love invisible things through knowing God visibly: Christ is for us the way of tending towards God (*via est nobis tendendi in Deum*).⁴⁹ Christ's humanity incites devotion, which devotion "has for its object matters concerning the Godhead." Here we witness one more example of the interinvolvement of intellect and will that we have been at pains to highlight throughout the course of this study. Devotion and faith are to be construed as mutually informing: greater devotion leads to greater faith and greater faith cultivates greater devotion. Given charity's priority over devotion, we can say that an increase in charity entails an increase in faith and vice versa. This more general point is treated at greater length in the chapter nine.

praecipuum est humanitas Christi, secundum quod in praefatione dicitur, *ut dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur*. Et ideo ea quae pertinent ad Christi humanitatem, per modum cuiusdam manuductionis, maxime devotionem excitant, cum tamen devotio principaliter circa ea quae sunt divinitatis consistat."

⁴⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 3 ad 2: "[A]d cognitionem divinatorum, ita ad dilectionem."

⁴⁹ *STh* I, q. 2 prol.

Before concluding this section we can note how Thomas's reflections on the dynamics of devotion are rooted in his own personal experience. William of Tocco records that Thomas read every day from the Church Fathers. When questioned about this habit, Thomas replied: "In this reading I nourish my devotion. On the basis of this devotion I rise up more easily into contemplation. Love thus pours forth into devotion and by the merit of this devotion intelligence ascends to greater heights."⁵⁰ Thomas's comments concerning the influence of devotion on intelligence was apparently not the fruit of abstract speculation but rather flowed from personal experience.

In brief, increase of faith is predicated upon the action of the Holy Spirit by way of conferring the Gifts of understanding and knowledge and upon the causal influence of charity (which is none other than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) which enkindles devotion. Although Thomas does not say so, this understanding of the dynamics that fuel increase of faith explains how a devout believer who has grasped only the rudiments of the faith can have greater faith than someone who has spent his lifetime studying theology. The latter case concerns faith being greater "on account of its being more explicit."⁵¹ Greater explication however does not entail greater certitude or greater devotion. Indeed, lack of devotion on the part of the will means that the object of faith is experienced as more distant since it is the will enlivened by charity that unites the believing subject with God. The less enkindled the will is the more detached must be the believer's experience of the living God. Given moreover the epistemic implications of the interinvolvement of intellect and will, there is a sense in which the intellectual understanding of the faith on the part of the devout believer who has grasped

⁵⁰ *S. Thomae Aquinatis vitae fontes praecipuae*, ed. P. Angelicus Ferrua, O.P. (Alba: Edizioni Domenicane, 1968), p. 64: "Ego in hac lectione devotionem colligo, ex qua facilius in speculationem consurgo, ut sic affectus habeat, unde se in devotionem diffundat, et intellectus ex huius merito ad altiora conscendat."

⁵¹ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4: "[I]n uno potest esse maior fides secundum maiorem fidei explicationem."

only the rudiments of the faith can be said to be qualitatively superior to that of the theologian who lacks devotion. As Garrigou-Lagrange, writes:

The theologian points out what is of faith and answers the sophisms of heresy by collating texts from Scripture and from the councils according to a human method of procedure, which is often very complicated. Simple souls, on the contrary, under a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost answer in a different manner, at times with an astonishing and unanswerable perspicacity which causes the theologian to exclaim: “Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.”⁵²

This statement of what seems to be an undeniable fact should not be interpreted as offering support to a fideistic attitude. It simply underlines the importance of an attitude of devotion for a deeper grasp of the faith. Thomas himself observes that anything that promotes greatness in an individual, including science, can foster self-confidence and thereby impede him from surrendering himself to God. Theological learning can sometimes hinder devotion while “in simple souls and women devotion abounds by repressing pride.”⁵³ It can nevertheless also increase devotion if the one who possesses this science submits it perfectly to God.⁵⁴ It is arguably the interaction between theological science and devotion that explains at least in part the phenomenon of the medieval theologian saint, a phenomenon not witnessed to the same degree in modernity. This interaction also arguably fuelled Thomas’s

⁵² Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Christian Perfection and Contemplation according to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*, trans. Sister M. Timothea Doyle, O.P. (Rockford, Illinois: Tan, 2003), p. 277.

⁵³ *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 3 ad 3: “[I]n simplicibus et mulieribus devotio abundat, elationem comprimendo.”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: “Si tamen scientiam, et quamcumque aliam perfectionem, homo perfecte Deo subdat, ex hoc ipso devotio augetur.”

theological genius. Adapting the words of Kieran Conley, O.S.B., we can say that if devotion is so necessary to the full perfection of theology, it is also true that theology is, or should be, helpful to devotion. A reciprocal causality is evident.⁵⁵

It might be objected that the relationship between faith and knowledge by grace parallels that which obtains between the understanding of first principles and natural knowledge. Since all men possess the understanding of first principles equally, so this objection goes, faith is also possessed in equal degree by all who have faith.⁵⁶ In the light of this objection the discussion above concerning certitude and devotion would make no sense. There is however a flaw in this objection, a flaw that resides in the failure to recognize that while the understanding of first principles has its basis in human nature, which is shared equally by all, “faith results from the gift of grace, which is not equally in all.”⁵⁷ There is of course a sense in which grace does not admit of more or less since of its nature it unites us to the supreme Good, namely God. It is however received in diverse degrees on the part of human subjects “inasmuch as one may be more perfectly enlightened by grace than another.”⁵⁸ This enlightenment is caused by the Gifts of the Holy Spirit pertaining to the intellect/reason and by devotion which in turn is caused by charity. Devotion has been discussed above while the Gifts of the Holy Spirit pertaining to the intellect/reason will be examined at greater length below.

⁵⁵ See Kieran Conley, O.S.B., *A Theology of Wisdom: A Study in St. Thomas* (Dubuque, Iowa: The Priory Press, 1963), p. 93: “If sanctity is so necessary to the full perfection of theology, it is also true that theology is, or should be, helpful to sanctity. A reciprocal causality is evident, as theology, the exemplar, paradoxically perfects its own integral formal cause.”

⁵⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4 *obj.* 3.

⁵⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4 ad 3: “[F]ides consequitur donum gratiae, quod non est aequaliter in omnibus.” Thomas deals with the question as to whether grace is greater in one man than in another at *STh* I-II, q. 112 a. 4.

⁵⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 112 a. 4: “[P]ro ut scilicet unus perfectius illustratur a lumine gratiae quam alius.”

Thomas's rebuttal of the objection that all men possess the understanding of first principles equally and that faith is therefore possessed in equal degree by all who have faith does not appeal only to the difference/disanalogy between the natural and graced levels of operation of the intellect. He also appeals to an analogy between the natural and graced operations of the intellect in order to explain how one person can possess greater faith than another: since the ability to understand first principles depends on the capacity of the intellect, it follows that "the truth of first principles is more known to one than to another."⁵⁹ If we look elsewhere in the *Summa*, we can appreciate more clearly what Thomas means by this assertion. At *STh* I, q. 2 a. 1, as part of his discussion of whether the existence of God is self-evident, Thomas distinguishes two ways in which a thing can be self-evident: on the one hand it can be self-evident in itself though not to us; on the other hand, it can be self-evident both in itself and in relation to us.⁶⁰ When the predicate of a proposition is contained in the notion of its subject then the proposition is self-evident. Thus, the proposition "Man is an animal" is self-evident because "animal is contained in the essence of man."⁶¹ If the notions of subject and predicate are known to everyone then the proposition will have the force of self-evidence for everyone. This point is clearly illustrated in the case of the first principles of demonstration, "the terms of which are common things that no one is ignorant of, such as being and non-being, whole and part, and such like."⁶² Some propositions, however, are self-evident only to a more restricted group of people because they alone understand the meanings

⁵⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4 ad 3: "[U]nus magis cognoscit virtutem principiorum quam alius."

⁶⁰ See also *STh* I-II, q. 94 a. 2, for another exposition of this point.

⁶¹ *STh* I, q. 2 a. 1: "[A]nimal est de ratione hominis."

⁶² *Ibid.*: "[Q]uorum termini sunt quaedam communia quae nullus ignorat, ut ens et non ens, totum et pars, et similia."

of their terms. Thus, for example, as Boethius points out, only the learned are capable of grasping mental concepts like “incorporeal substances are not in space.”⁶³

The foregoing discussion enables us to understand why in the realm of faith one person enjoys a greater grasp of principles than another:⁶⁴ since grace increases the capacity of the intellect, those who receive a greater degree of grace are by that very fact endowed with a greater insight into the principles of faith, that is to say, into the articles of faith. Thomas explains that “faith is to knowledge by grace, as the understanding of principles is to natural knowledge, since the articles of faith are the first principles of knowledge by grace.”⁶⁵ It follows therefore that those whose intellects are more illumined by grace not only possess an understanding of the articles of faith that transcends the understanding of those less illumined by grace, the knowledge by grace that flows from those principles which are the articles of faith is possessed more excellently by them also. Expressed in terms encountered above, such people enjoy a greater certitude of faith.

Understanding of the principles of faith and the knowledge by grace that flows from this understanding refer in effect to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, to understanding and knowledge respectively. A consideration of these two Gifts (which correspond to faith) along with the Gift of counsel (which corresponds to the virtue of prudence) will afford an opportunity to clarify in greater detail how grace elevates the operations of the human intellect/reason. As a prelude to our treatment of these Gifts, however, let us first of all revisit Thomas’s general theology of the Gifts.

⁶³ Ibid.: “Et ideo contingit, ut dicit Boetius in libro de hebdomadibus, quod quaedam sunt communes animi conceptiones et per se notae, apud sapientes tantum, ut incorporalia in loco non esse.”

⁶⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 5 a. 4: “[U]nus magis cognoscit virtutem principiorum quam alius.”

⁶⁵ Ibid.: “[I]ta se habet fides in cognitione gratuita sicut intellectus principiorum in cognitione naturali, eo quod articuli fidei sunt prima principia gratuita cognitionis.”

3. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

At the outset it is necessary to be clear that the Gifts of the Holy Spirit are not the preserve of the spiritual elite. They are in fact necessary for salvation. Just as nature does not fail in necessities, neither does grace. Human reason is perfected in two ways: firstly, by the light of natural reason in accordance with its natural perfection; secondly, by the theological virtues with regard to its supernatural perfection. Although supernatural perfection is of course more perfect than natural perfection, we nevertheless possess the latter in a more perfect manner than the former because we possess the latter fully whereas we possess the former imperfectly, “since we know and love God imperfectly.”⁶⁶ Anything that possesses a nature or a form or a virtue perfectly does not require external assistance in order to operate according to them – allowing of course for the fact that God works interiorly within every nature and every will; it can work of itself according to its nature or form or virtue. In contrast, that which possesses a nature or form or virtue imperfectly requires to be moved by another since it cannot work of itself. As a concrete illustration of this point, Thomas offers the analogy of a physician who can work by himself since he knows the medical art perfectly. His student, however, “who is not yet fully instructed, cannot work by himself, but needs to receive instructions from him.”⁶⁷ While it is possible for human beings to direct themselves to their connatural end through the judgment of reason, the motion of reason – albeit informed by the theological virtues – does not suffice to direct them to the supernatural end

⁶⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2: “[I]mperfecte enim diligimus et cognoscimus Deum.” See also *In III Sent*, d. 35 q. 2 a. 2 qca. 1: “Sicut autem mens humana in essentiam rei non ingreditur nisi per accidentia, ita etiam in spiritualia non ingreditur nisi per corporalia, et sensibilibus similitudines, ut Dionysius dicit.”

⁶⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2: “[D]iscipulus eius, qui nondum est plene instructus, non potest per se operari, nisi ab eo instruatur.”

for the reason already cited: we possess the theological virtues imperfectly and they therefore need to be moved by the Holy Spirit. In other words, in order to achieve his supernatural end “it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁸

Thomas explains the necessity for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit by way of analogy with the moral virtues. Just as the moral virtues perfect the appetitive powers, bringing them to a greater participation in reason and thereby disposing them to obey reason more promptly, so too “the gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits whereby man is perfected to obey readily the Holy Ghost.”⁶⁹ Employing this analogy further in order to explicate the nature of the Gifts, Thomas writes:

Now just as it is natural for the appetitive powers to be moved by the command of reason, so it is natural for all the forces in man to be moved by the instinct of God, as by a superior power. Therefore whatever powers in man can be the principles of human actions, can also be the subjects of Gifts, even as they are virtues; and such powers are the reason and appetite.⁷⁰

In chapter five we noted that Thomas’s deliberations concerning the Gifts are intimately linked with his discussions about the Holy Spirit in the *Prima Pars*, both in his

⁶⁸ Ibid.: “[N]ecessarium est homini habere donum spiritus sancti.”

⁶⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 3: “[D]ona spiritus sancti sunt quidam habitus, quibus homo perficitur ad prompte obediendum spiritui sancto.”

⁷⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 4: “Sicut autem vires appetitivae natae sunt moveri per imperium rationis, ita omnes vires humanae natae sunt moveri per instinctum Dei, sicut a quadam superiori potentia. Et ideo in omnibus viribus hominis quae possunt esse principia humanorum actuum, sicut sunt virtutes, ita etiam sunt dona, scilicet in ratione, et in vi appetitiva.”

treatment of the name ‘Gift’ at *STh* I, q. 38, and in his reflections concerning the divine missions at *STh* I, q. 43. Thomas’s treatment of the Gifts constitutes in effect a theology of the operation of the Trinity in the economy of salvation, a point that it is crucial to bear in mind in the remainder of this chapter as we examine his teaching with regard to the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, and counsel. These three Gifts relate to reason in both its speculative and practical aspects. Wisdom is moreover not merely speculative but practical too.⁷¹ A discussion of it is left however until the next chapter since, although its essence is in the intellect, it has its cause in the will.⁷²

As in his general treatment of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit at *STh* I-II, q. 68, Thomas’s account of the specific Gifts in the *Secunda Pars Secundae* is driven by the witness of Scripture. The first of the Gifts considered is that of understanding (*intellectus*). The witness of the biblical word is decisive in determining at the very outset that understanding is indeed a Gift of the Holy Spirit: “It is written (Isa. xi. 2): *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding.*”⁷³ Not surprisingly, Thomas quotes this text when he turns to the treatment of the Gifts of knowledge, counsel, and wisdom.⁷⁴ While the Gift of understanding is attributed to the Holy Spirit, reference to St. Luke’s Gospel reminds the reader of its Christological character: “[T]hus it is written (Luke xxiv. 27, 32) that Our Lord opened the scriptures to His disciples, that they might understand them.”⁷⁵ The Son, along

⁷¹ See *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 3.

⁷² See *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2.

⁷³ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 1 *sed contra*: “[D]icitur Isaiae XI, *requiescet super eum spiritus domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus.*”

⁷⁴ See *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 1 *sed contra*; q. 52 a. 1 *sed contra*; and q. 45 a. 1 *sed contra*.

⁷⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 2 *sed contra*: “[D]icitur Luc. ult. quod dominus aperuit discipulis suis sensum ut intelligerent Scripturas.”

with the Father, sends the Spirit to enlighten us. Thus, as Christ remarks in Jn 8:12, “*He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness.*”⁷⁶ In his commentary on St. John’s Gospel, Thomas calls attention to three kinds of darkness, of which the first two are of particular relevance in the context of the Gift of understanding: the darkness of ignorance, the darkness of sin, and the darkness of damnation. The darkness of ignorance and that of sin are related since, although the latter does not pertain to reason of itself, it nonetheless relates to it by way of the affections which “by being badly disposed by passion or habit, seek something as good that is not really good.”⁷⁷ Since the light of Christ is universal “it universally expels all darkness”⁷⁸ – in the context of Thomas’s treatment of the Gift of understanding, the intellectual darkness that is due to ignorance and to sin. Hence the Scriptural warrant for Thomas’s insistence that the Gift of understanding is granted to all in the state of grace. Grace is of course nothing other than the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer, the Spirit Who leads the believer to Christ. In other words, anyone who has the Gift of understanding comes to Christ, a point that is again drawn from the teaching of Scripture: “Our Lord said (Jo. vi. 45): *Every one that hath heard of the Father, and hath learned, cometh to Me.*”⁷⁹

It is true that the number of Scriptural references in Thomas’s treatment of the Gifts of knowledge and counsel is somewhat less than that encountered in the question on the Gift of understanding. In commenting on this fact it ought to be noted that such references are certainly not completely absent: in both cases the basic text that fuels Thomas’s discussions is

⁷⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 4 *sed contra*: “[S]ecundum illud Ioan. VIII, *qui sequitur me non ambulat in tenebris*. Ergo nullus habens gratiam caret dono intellectus.”

⁷⁷ *In Joh* VII, lectio II [1144]: “Et istae sunt rationis humanae non ex se, sed ex appetitu, inquantum male dispositus per passiones vel habitum, appetit aliquid ut bonum, quod tamen non est vere bonum”

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*: “[U]niversaliter tenebras omnes expellit.”

⁷⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 5 *sed contra*: “[D]ominus dicit, Ioan. VI, *omnis qui audit a patre et didicit, venit ad me.*”

Isaiah 11:2, as we have already noted. This text is quoted in the *sed contra* of the first articles in the respective questions that deal with these two Gifts. The intimate relationship that the Gifts of knowledge and counsel bear to the Gift of understanding, a relationship that is brought out in the following sections, perhaps helps to explain the relative absence of Scriptural references. In order to grasp better the relationship between the Gifts of understanding and knowledge it is instructive to invoke the distinction between intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*), which nonetheless do not represent two different powers. Likewise, in seeking to comprehend the Gift of counsel it is useful to have recourse to the notion that the practical intellect is an extension of the speculative intellect: *intellectus speculativus per extensionem fit practicus* (theoretic reason becomes practical).⁸⁰

In what follows we see that while the Gift of understanding does not allow us to understand perfectly the things that pertain to the divine essence, it does enable us to understand the various propositions revealed by God that manifest both His essence and the relation of creatures to His essence. Moreover, it imparts a perfect understanding of other things that are subordinate to faith. Thomas has in mind in particular human actions in this regard. Here we witness in operation the oft repeated adage that grace perfects nature, for just as the speculative reason becomes practical by extension so too does the Gift of understanding extend to certain actions, albeit not as its principal object. Similarly, while the Gift of knowledge principally has regard to speculative matters, it too extends to the realm of action. In particular, it imparts to the believer a right judgment concerning the ordering of limited goods towards eternal Beatitude. The relationship of the Gift of knowledge to the Gift of understanding is usefully explicated, as already intimated, by reference to the *intellectus-ratio* distinction: reason (*ratio*) is related to understanding (*intellectus*) as movement is to

⁸⁰ *STh* I, q. 79, a. 11 *sed contra*.

rest. It both begins and terminates its discursive activity in understanding. In contrast to natural understanding, the increase of which is directly related to the discursive activity of reason, the Gift of knowledge imparts many conclusions without the need for discursive reasoning. Since the Gift of understanding principally regards speculative matters and practical matters only secondarily by way of extension, another Gift is necessary in order to fortify reason in its discernment of the means suitable to the attainment of the particular goods that the Gift of knowledge has proposed to the believer as ordered to the attainment of Beatitude. The Gift in question, namely counsel, corresponds to prudence. Finite human reason would be incapable of ascertaining all the singular and contingent things that can arise in practical affairs; hence the need for the Gift of counsel, whereby God directs human reason. Directed by God Himself, human reason is able to pass objective judgment on practical situations.

3.1 *The Gift of understanding*

Thomas begins his treatment of the Gift of understanding by explaining the etymology of the Latin word for ‘understanding,’ namely *intellectus*. Thomas avers that the related infinitive form, *intelligere*, is the same as *intus legere*, which means “to read inwardly.”⁸¹ Understanding (*intellectus*) therefore implies an intimate knowledge which “penetrates into the very essence of a thing.”⁸² As will become apparent below in our examination of the Gift of knowledge and as Carl N. Still observes, “It is by no means accidental ... that gifted knowledge as apprehensive of the objects of faith is called a gift of under-standing, and not a gift of reason. For gifted understanding (*donum intellectus*) takes

⁸¹ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 1.

⁸² *Ibid.*: “[C]ognitio autem intellectiva penetrat usque ad essentiam rei, obiectum enim intellectus est quod quid est”

its name from natural understanding (*intellectus*), on the grounds that it reproduces the simplicity and immediacy of the latter's activity."⁸³ As in the case of natural understanding, gifted understanding penetrates to the essence of things and immediately grasps first principles.⁸⁴ Clearly, the stronger the light of understanding, the more deeply can it probe into the reality of things. The natural light of understanding is, however, finite and is consequently limited in what it can know. A supernatural light is required if we are to know what we cannot know by our natural understanding. Indeed, this supernatural light, namely the Gift of understanding, is necessary if we are to reach certain higher truths by which we are ordered to Beatitude.⁸⁵

Thomas in no way allows that we can perfectly understand the things that are the direct object of faith in this life even with the infused Gift of understanding.⁸⁶ Perfect understanding of something requires that one apprehend its essence and that one understand the proposition about the essence, which proposition is the result of composition/division by the intellect. In the case of created – and therefore – composite substances, matter and form or the combination of subject and accident furnish the basis for the act of composition wrought by the intellect. This real composition in things is the foundation and cause of the truth in the *compositio* effected by the intellect and expressed in words. Aquinas explains:

⁸³ Carl N. Still, ““Gifted Knowledge”: An Exception to Thomistic Epistemology,” *The Thomist* 63 (1999), p. 177.

⁸⁴ See *In III Sent*, d. 35 q. 2 a. 2 qca. 1: “[S]i supernaturali lumine mens intantum elevetur ut ad ipsa spiritualia aspicienda introducat, hoc supra humanum modum est; et hoc facit intellectus donum, quod de auditis mentem illustrat, ut ad modum primorum principiorum statim audita probentur; et ideo intellectus donum est.”

⁸⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 1.

⁸⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 2.

For example, when I say, “Socrates is a man,” the truth of this enunciation is caused by combining the form *humanity* with *the individual matter* by means of which Socrates is *this* man; and when I say, “Man is white,” the cause of the truth of this enunciation is the combining of whiteness with the subject. It is similar in other cases. And the same thing is evident in the case of separation.⁸⁷

God’s simplicity, however, clearly precludes this kind of understanding and judgment on the part of the human intellect even with the assistance of the infused Gifts. Imperfect understanding however is possible when, as Rziha explains, the human intellect “understands the many propositions revealed by God that manifest the divine essence and the relation of creatures to this essence.”⁸⁸

Notwithstanding this fact, the Gift of understanding imports what Still describes as “a new intellectual perspicacity with respect to the first principles of faith, including the “First Truth” – God, as presented propositionally.”⁸⁹ Thomas himself writes that “The gift of understanding is about the first principles of that knowledge which is conferred by grace; but otherwise than faith, because it belongs to faith to assent to them, while it belongs to the gift of understanding to pierce with the mind the things that are said.”⁹⁰ The Gift of understanding, so this statement infers, affords the believer a more penetrating grasp of the

⁸⁷ *In Metaphys.*, IX, lect. 11 (1898): “Sicut cum dico, Socrates est homo, veritas huius enunciationis causatur ex compositione formae humanae ad materiam individualement, per quam Socrates est hic homo: et cum dico, homo est albus, causa veritatis est compositio albedinis ad subiectum: et similiter est in aliis. Et idem patet in divisione.”

⁸⁸ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, p. 248, n. 182.

⁸⁹ Still, ““Gifted Knowledge”: An Exception to Thomistic Epistemology,” p. 181.

⁹⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 6 ad 2: “[D]onum intellectus est circa prima principia cognitionis gratuita, aliter tamen quam fides. Nam ad fidem pertinet eis assentire, ad donum vero intellectus pertinet penetrare mente ea quae dicuntur.”

first principles of the faith than that afforded by the virtue of faith alone would. This point is corroborated by Thomas in his commentary on Galatians: “[T]o know the invisible things of God darkly is in keeping with the human mode, and such knowledge pertains to the virtue of faith; but to know the same things more penetratingly and above the human mode pertains to the gift of understanding.”⁹¹

Although we cannot perfectly understand the things that are the direct object of faith in this life even with the infused Gift of understanding, we can nevertheless perfectly understand certain other things that are subordinate to faith.⁹² What Thomas has in mind here is good actions. He explains that “good actions have a certain relationship to faith: Since *faith worketh through charity*, according to the Apostle (Gal. v. 6).”⁹³ Once again we witness an instance of grace perfecting human nature, this time with regard to practical reason being an extension of theoretical reason: *intellectus speculativus per extensionem fit practicus*

⁹¹ *In Gal V*, lectio 6 [329]: “[P]uta cognoscere invisibilia Dei sub aenigmate est per modum humanum: et haec cognitio pertinet ad virtutem fidei; sed cognoscere ea perspicue et supra humanum modum, pertinet ad donum intellectus.” For an examination of the role of images in Thomas’s construal of gifted knowledge, see Still, ““Gifted Knowledge”: An Exception to Thomistic Epistemology,” pp. 183-90. In the course of his discussion, Still writes: “The strengthened light that is brought to bear in gifted knowledge allows a piercing glance at spiritual reality, which is present though hidden in the doctrinal symbols that convey it. The images formed from these symbols are not then the objects, but rather the instruments, of cognition; like slides in a projector, they serve to focus light passed through them in a structured way. If illumined by a relatively weak light, only the slide itself will be seen. But if amplified by an incommensurably greater light, not only the slide but its image will become visible at a depth far beyond the slide’s own surface. To complete the analogy, the form imprinted on the slide serves to focus the light, yet without overshadowing the resulting illumination of its image” (ibid., p. 185).

⁹² *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 3.

⁹³ Ibid.: “Operationes autem bonae quendam ordinem ad fidem habent, nam fides per dilectionem operatur, ut apostolus dicit, ad Gal. V.”

(theoretic reason becomes practical).⁹⁴ Theoretical reason is presupposed by practical reason. The latter is rooted in the former. Consequently, practical reason furnishes a measure of right action because speculative reason provides it with this measure which it has in turn received from reality itself. Pieper explains Thomas's position:

The proper object of the theoretical reason is the truth in things. The proper object of the practical reason is "the true as the measure of action," "the true which extends into the good." The object of theoretical reason includes and comprises the object of practical reason. The object of theoretical reason, the true, "becomes" the object of practical reason by establishing a relation with the object of the will.⁹⁵

Just as the theoretical reason becomes practical by extension so too does the Gift of understanding extend to certain actions although these actions are not its principal object but rather "in so far as the rule of our actions is the eternal law, to which the higher reason, which is perfected by the gift of understanding, adheres by contemplating and consulting it, as Augustine says (*De Trin.* xii. 7)."⁹⁶ As already stated, the rule of human actions is human reason. It is also the eternal law, "which is God's reason, so to speak."⁹⁷ These two rules are distinguished in that human reason is the proximate rule while the eternal law is the first rule. Since the eternal law lies beyond the ken of unaided human reason, so too does the knowledge of actions ruled by the eternal law surpass it. For human actions to be ruled by the

⁹⁴ *STh* I, q. 79, a. 11 *sed contra*.

⁹⁵ Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth*, trans. Lothar Krauth and Lange, Stella (Ignatius: San Francisco, 1989), p. 143.

⁹⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 3: "[I]nquantum in agendis regulamur *rationibus aeternis, quibus conspiciendis et consulendis*, secundum Augustinum, XII de Trin., inhaeret superior ratio, quae dono intellectus perficitur."

⁹⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 71 a. 6: "[Q]uae est quasi ratio Dei."

eternal law “the supernatural light of a gift of the Holy Ghost”⁹⁸ is required. When human reason, perfected by the Gift of understanding, is ruled by the eternal law it enjoys a right estimate about the last end, namely Beatitude.⁹⁹ Rziha summarizes well Thomas’s account of the Gift of understanding:

Because understanding God through the principles of faith is the highest act of the highest power in this life, the gift of understanding results in an especially perfect form of cognitive participation in the eternal law. Likewise, as practical by extension, this gift allows humans to supernaturally understand the universal principles from which actions are derived. By means of this gift, the Holy Spirit gives humans a certain knowledge of the eternal law by which humans can guide themselves.¹⁰⁰

The Gift of understanding therefore relates both to speculative and to practical matters. However, to be clear, it relates to these matters “not as to the judgment but as the apprehension, by grasping what is said.”¹⁰¹ It belongs to the Gift of knowledge (*scientia*) to form a sure and right judgment about things that are proposed to be believed.¹⁰² We therefore turn to a consideration of Thomas’s treatment of this Gift. Appeal to the distinction between understanding/intellect (*intellectus*) and reason (*ratio*) in their natural operations helps to throw light on the relationship between the Gift of understanding and the Gift of knowledge.

⁹⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 3 ad 3: “[I]ndiget supernaturali lumine doni spiritus sancti.”

⁹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, p. 248.

¹⁰¹ *STh* II-II, q. 8 a. 6 ad 3: “[D]onum intellectus pertinet ad utramque cognitionem, scilicet speculativam et practicam, non quantum ad iudicium, sed quantum ad apprehensionem, ut capiantur ea quae dicuntur.”

¹⁰² *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 1.

An important difference obtains, however, between the natural and graced levels of operation in that in the former knowledge is attained by means of the discursive activity of reason whereas in the latter it is instinctual, that is to say, it is not reached discursively.

3.2 *The Gift of knowledge*

In order to understand the Gift of knowledge in its relation to the Gift of understanding, it is instructive to give a brief outline of Thomas's account of *intellectus-ratio* distinction.¹⁰³ At *STh* I, q. 79 a. 8, Aquinas explains the distinction between reason (*ratio*) and understanding (*intellectus*) in terms of movement and rest. The principle and terminus of the movement of *ratio* is *intellectus*:

Reasoning, therefore, is compared to understanding, as movement is to rest, or acquisition to possession; of which one belongs to the perfect, the other to the imperfect. And since movement always proceeds from something immovable, and ends in something at rest; hence it is that human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery, advances from certain things simply understood—namely, the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ For a more extended discussion of this distinction, see Colm McClements, 'The Distinction *Intellectus-Ratio* in the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas: A Historical and Critical study' (PhD diss., Université Catholique de Louvain, 1990).

¹⁰⁴ *STh* I, q. 79 a. 8: "Patet ergo quod ratiocinari comparatur ad intelligere sicut moveri ad quiescere, vel acquirere ad habere, quorum unum est perfecti, aliud autem imperfecti. Et quia motus semper ab immobili procedit, et ad aliquid quietum terminatur; inde est quod ratiocinatio humana, secundum viam inquisitionis vel inventionis, procedit a quibusdam simpliciter intellectis, quae sunt prima principia; et rursus, in via iudicii, resolvendo redit ad prima principia, ad quae inventa examinat." See also *De ver* q. 15 a. 1

Ratio is therefore characterized by its discursiveness. Thus, Thomas writes in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, "it is according to man's nature to proceed by the steps of reason to a knowledge of the truth. Reason has this peculiar characteristic that it grasps the truth gradually, and as a consequence man properly perfects himself in knowledge little by little."¹⁰⁵ The movement of *ratio* goes forth from *intellectus* and resolves by judgment back into it. Commenting on the fact that the movement of *ratio* is not only rectilinear, proceeding from what is known to what is unknown, but that it is also has a circular structure, Jan Aertsen writes: "[R]eason begins from the one and simple, namely the 'intellectus' of the first principles; and it proceeds through the many in order to terminate in the one."¹⁰⁶

We must bear in mind in this regard that *ratio* and *intellectus* are not distinct powers. Since *ratio* and *intellectus* are compared to each other as movement to rest and since movement and rest relate not to different powers but to the same one, it follows that "by the same power do we understand and reason: and so it is clear that in man reason and intellect are the same power."¹⁰⁷ Thomas makes the same point in the following terms elsewhere:

¹⁰⁵ *In I Ethic*, lectio 11 [132]: "Ad hominis enim naturam pertinet ratione uti ad veritatis cognitionem. Rationis autem proprium est ab uno in aliud procedere, intellectus autem proprium est statim apprehendere veritatem; et ideo ad hominem pertinet ut paulatim in cognitione veritatis proficiat"

¹⁰⁶ Jan Aertsen, *Nature and Creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Leiden/New York/København/Köln: E.J. Brill, 1988), p. 196. See *De Ver* q. 10 a. 8 ad 10: "Haec autem circulatio attenditur in hoc quod ratio ex principiis secundum viam inveniendi in conclusiones pervenit, et conclusiones inventas in principia resolvendo examinat secundum viam iudicandi. Et secundum hoc non est ad propositum"; and *In De Div Nom* c. 7, lectio 2 [213]: "[I]n processu rationis est quaedam convolutio ut circulus, dum ratio, ab uno incipiens, per multa procedens, ad unum terminatur."

¹⁰⁷ *STh* I, q. 79 a. 8: "[P]er eandem potentiam intelligimus et ratiocinamur. Et sic patet quod in homine eadem potentia est ratio et intellectus."

“[R]eason itself is called understanding because it shares in the intellectual simplicity, by reason of which it begins and through which it terminates its proper activity.”¹⁰⁸

In one respect the relationship between the Gift of understanding and the Gift of knowledge is similar to the relationship between the understanding of principles and the knowledge that results from the judgment of reason as it resolves back into understanding, as described above. This similarity pertains to the necessity of (1) possessing a sound grasp of the things to be believed; and, (2) right judgment concerning them. Thomas makes this point in the following text:

[T]wo things are requisite in order that the human intellect may perfectly assent to the truth of the faith: one of these is that he should have a sound grasp of the things that are proposed to be believed, and this pertains to the gift of understanding ... while the other is that he should have a sure and right judgment on them, so as to discern what is to be believed, from what is not to be believed, and for this the gift of knowledge is required.¹⁰⁹

Notwithstanding this similarity, there is important respect in which the relationship between the Gift of understanding and the Gift of knowledge is dissimilar to the relationship between the understanding of principles and the knowledge that results from the judgment of

¹⁰⁸ *De ver* q. 10 a. 1: “[R]atio intellectus dicitur ratione eius quod participat de intellectuali simplicitate, ex quo est principium et terminus in eius propria operatione.”

¹⁰⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 1: “[A]d hoc quod intellectus humanus perfecte assentiat veritati fidei duo requiruntur. Quorum unum est quod sane capiat ea quae proponuntur, quod pertinet ad donum intellectus ... Aliud autem est ut habeat certum et rectum iudicium de eis, discernendo scilicet credenda non credendis. Et ad hoc necessarium est donum scientiae.”

reason: God's knowledge is not discursive and, since the Gift of knowledge participates in the divine knowledge, it cannot be discursive either: "God's knowledge is not discursive, or argumentative, but absolute and simple, to which that knowledge is likened which is a gift of the Holy Ghost since it is a certain participated likeness of it."¹¹⁰ John I. Jenkins summarizes this teaching in these words: "[H]aving understood what is proposed for faith through the Gift of Understanding, one firmly assents, through a non-discursive apprehension, to those propositions as divinely revealed."¹¹¹ Gifted knowledge, since it is a participated likeness of God's simple knowledge, means that the believer knows more through less intellectual forms.¹¹² As Rziha remarks, "by knowing the fundamental truths of the faith, the intellect knows many conclusions as well without recourse to discursive reasoning."¹¹³ While proportioned to the mode of human cognition, the Gift of knowledge in effect moves the believer in the direction of angelic knowledge.

¹¹⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 1 ad 1: "[D]ivina scientia non est discursiva vel ratiocinativa, sed absoluta et simplex. Cui similis est scientia quae ponitur donum spiritus sancti, cum sit quaedam participativa similitudo ipsius." I have slightly amended the Christian Classics translation. See *STh* I, q. 14 a. 7, for a discussion of the non-discursive nature of God's knowledge.

¹¹¹ Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas*, p. 195.

¹¹² See *STh* I, q. 89 a. 1: "Deus per unam suam essentiam omnia intelligit; superiores autem intellectualium substantiarum, etsi per plures formas intelligant, tamen intelligunt per pauciores, et magis universales, et virtuosiores ad comprehensionem rerum, propter efficaciam virtutis intellectivae quae est in eis; in inferioribus autem sunt formae plures, et minus universales, et minus efficaces ad comprehensionem rerum, inquantum deficiunt a virtute intellectiva superiorum. Si ergo inferiores substantiae haberent formas in illa universalitate in qua habent superiores, quia non sunt tantae efficaciae in intelligendo, non acciperent per eas perfectam cognitionem de rebus, sed in quadam communitate et confusione. Quod aliquantulum apparet in hominibus, nam qui sunt debilioris intellectus, per universales conceptiones magis intelligentium non accipiunt perfectam cognitionem, nisi eis singula in speciali explicentur."

¹¹³ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, p. 249.

The Gift of knowledge is to be distinguished from the Gift of wisdom, which will be discussed further in the next chapter. In brief, “a wise man in any branch of knowledge is one who knows the highest cause of that kind of knowledge, and is able to judge of all matters by that cause: and a wise man *absolutely*, is one who knows the cause which is absolutely highest, namely God.”¹¹⁴ Thus, wisdom pertains to knowledge of divine things. Knowledge, in contrast, pertains to the certitude of judgment that arises from the consideration of secondary causes. In other words, “the gift of knowledge is only about human or created things.”¹¹⁵ In brief, to judge creatures in the light of divine things pertains to wisdom while to know God through created things belongs formally to knowledge, albeit materially to wisdom, for “every cognitive habit regards formally the mean through which things are known, and materially, the things that are known through the mean.”¹¹⁶ Thus, while it is possible for unaided reason to attain through reflection on created things to the conclusion that God exists, the Gift of knowledge grants the believer a non-discursive and certain grasp of this truth.

The Gift of knowledge, like the Gift of understanding, relates principally to the speculative reason “in as much as it is founded on the First Truth.”¹¹⁷ Here we recall Thomas’s teaching concerning practical reason as an extension of theoretical reason.¹¹⁸ Thus, although the Gift of knowledge does indeed principally have regard to theoretical reason, it

¹¹⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 2: “[D]icitur enim sapiens in unoquoque genere qui novit altissimam causam illius generis, per quam potest de omnibus iudicare. Simpliciter autem sapiens dicitur qui novit altissimam causam simpliciter, scilicet Deum.”

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*: “[D]onum scientiae est solum circa res humanas, vel circa res creatas.”

¹¹⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 2 ad 3: “[Q]uilibet cognoscitivus habitus formaliter quidem respicit medium per quod aliquid cognoscitur, materialiter autem id quod per medium cognoscitur.”

¹¹⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 3: “[I]nquantum scilicet inhaeret primae veritati.”

¹¹⁸ See section 3.1 above.

extends secondarily to action “since we are directed in our actions by the knowledge of matters of faith and of conclusions drawn therefrom.”¹¹⁹ Thomas also draws attention to the fact that the First Truth, the object of speculative reason, is at once our ultimate Beatitude, and so the ultimate object of practical reason: “[S]ince the First Truth is also the last end for the sake of which our works are done, hence it is that faith extends to works, according to Gal. 5:6: *Faith . . . worketh by charity.*”¹²⁰ In his commentary on the letter to the Galatians, Thomas makes it clear that faith that is informed by charity necessarily expresses itself in good works by appealing to further Scriptural warrant: ““Faith without works is dead” (Jam 2:26).”¹²¹

In concluding our treatment of the Gift of knowledge, we follow Thomas in focusing on the influence of this Gift on practical judgment about created things. Those who err in their judgment concerning creatures, placing their final end in them, turn away from God.¹²² They consequently forfeit their true Good. It is reasonable to relate Thomas’s discussion of the influence of the Gift of knowledge on practical judgment about created things to his treatment of various candidates for Beatitude. In the treatise on Beatitude, *STh* I-II, q. 2, he dismisses various candidates for ultimate Beatitude: objective Beatitude cannot reside in riches, in honours, in fame or glory, in power, in well-being of body, in pleasures of sense, or in a good quality of soul – all of which things are transient and corporeal and beneath the

¹¹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 3: “[S]ecundum quod per scientiam credibilium, et eorum quae ad credibilia consequuntur, dirigimur in agendis.”

¹²⁰ Ibid.: “[Q]uia prima veritas est etiam ultimus finis, propter quem operamur, inde etiam est quod fides ad operationem se extendit, secundum illud Gal. V, *fides per dilectionem operatur.*”

¹²¹ In *Gal* V, lectio II: “Sed fides, non informis, sed ea quae per dilectionem operatur, Iac. II, 26: fides sine operibus mortua est, etc.”

¹²² *STh* II-II, q. 9 a. 4 ad 1.

dignity of the rational creature. Such things deflect the rational creature in a direction which is opposed to that whereby it tends to its ultimate Beatitude in God. When a man judges created things through the Gift of knowledge, however, he sees how created things can deflect him from the true goal of his life and, “by his right judgment, man directs creatures to the Divine good.”¹²³ When interpreted in the context of Thomas’s treatment of the Gift of knowledge, *STh* I-II, q. 2 is seen to be anything but a purely intellectual search for God. It does indeed provide us with the fruits of an intellectual search but, as Pinckaers tells us, it also details “a spiritual journey beginning with ascetical detachment from external goods, continuing with detachment from interior goods, and culminating in a summit which could be called mystical, namely a union with God loved above all else as the Unique One, as the Ultimate End, and as Perfect Blessedness.”¹²⁴

Yet, as stated, the Gift of knowledge deals primarily with speculative matters and only by extension with practical matters. It is concerned simply with appraising whether particular goods are true goods, ordering the believer towards final Beatitude, or apparent goods, diverting him away from the attainment of this end. A further Gift, namely the Gift of counsel, is required in order to strengthen reason in its research concerning the best means to attain the particular goods that are ordered towards the attainment of final Beatitude. While the Gift of knowledge does not directly correspond to prudence, since it is concerned with speculative matters, it does nevertheless help it “by a kind of extension.”¹²⁵ (Thomas is here obviously referring to the notion that the practical reason is an extension of the speculative:

¹²³ Ibid.: “[H]omo per rectum iudicium scientiae creaturas ordinat in bonum divinum.”

¹²⁴ Servais Pinckaers, “The desire for happiness as a way to God”, in *Thomas Aquinas: Approaches to Truth*, ed. James McEvoy and Dunne, Michael (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002), p. 58.

¹²⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 51 a. 2 ad 2: “[S]ecundum quandam extensionem eam adiuvat.”

*intellectus speculativus per extensionem fit practicus.*¹²⁶) The operation of the Gift of counsel is therefore informed by the Gifts of understanding and knowledge, which are infused with faith. In contrast to the Gift of knowledge, however, the Gift of counsel “corresponds to prudence directly, because it is concerned about the same things.”¹²⁷ It imparts right judgment concerning those things that are directed to the end of eternal life, whether they be necessary for salvation or not.”¹²⁸ Thus, the Gift of counsel is a manifestation of God’s providential love for human beings, a providential love whereby He predestines us to be conformed to the image of His Son.

3.3 *The Gift of counsel*

Since the Gift of counsel is concerned with “what has to be done for the sake of the end,” it corresponds to the virtue of prudence in its infused form.¹²⁹ It therefore makes sense to begin our examination of Thomas’s doctrine concerning this Gift by briefly clarifying his teaching about prudence. The virtue of prudence perfects the practical intellect. Thomas describes it as “the right reason of things to be done.”¹³⁰ As the right reason of things to be done, prudence requires that one be “rightly disposed in regard to the principles of this reason

¹²⁶ *STh* I, q. 79, a. 11 *sed contra*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*: “Donum autem consilii directe respondet prudentiae, sicut circa eadem existens.”

¹²⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 52 a. 4 ad 2: “[C]onsilium, secundum quod est donum spiritus sancti, dirigit nos in omnibus quae ordinantur in finem vitae aeternae, sive sint de necessitate salutis sive non.”

¹²⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 52 a. 2 *sed contra*: “[D]onum consilii est circa ea quae sunt agenda propter finem. Sed circa haec etiam est prudentia. Ergo sibi invicem correspondent.” For an extended discussion of infused and acquired prudence in the treatise on prudence in the *Summa Theologiae* see Knobel, “The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas’ Moral Philosophy,” pp. 85-124. For a discussion of infused prudence in particular see *ibid.*, 101-110.

¹³⁰ *ST* I-II, q. 56 a. 3: “[R]ecta ratio agibilium.”

of things to be done, that is in regard to their ends.”¹³¹ Just as man is rightly disposed to the principles of speculative truth (such as the principle of contradiction) by the natural light of the active intellect, so too is he rightly disposed to the principles of the reason of things to be done – which principles are provided by the ends to which man is rightly disposed – by the rectitude of the will.¹³² It follows that rectitude of will is intrinsic to the notion of prudence. The corollary is that distorted willing necessarily vitiates the virtue of prudence. Right willing facilitates prudential reasoning while distorted willing impedes it. The degree to which prudential reasoning accords with the truth of things depends on the extent to which a person wills what is truly good. The upright will, determined by virtuous habits, will experience a certain consonance with “the true goods which reason grasps as points of reference to guide itself in its work,”¹³³ to borrow a phrase from Rafael-Tomás Caldera.

Prudence or good counsel (εὐβουλία), whether acquired or infused, guides one according to principles that reason can understand. It “applies universal principles to the particular conclusions of practical matters.”¹³⁴ Due to its limitations, however, human reason is incapable of grasping singular and contingent things that may arise and so, as analogy with human experience suggests, it needs to be directed by God Who knows all things: God directs human reason by the Gift of counsel “whereby man is directed as though counseled by God, just as, in human affairs, those who are unable to take counsel for themselves, seek counsel

¹³¹ Ibid.: “[R]equiritur ad prudentiam quod homo se bene habeat ad principia huius rationis agendorum, quae sunt fines.”

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Rafael-Tomás Caldera, ‘Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d’Aquin’ (PhD diss., Université de Fribourg, 1974), pp. 209-210: “[L]es vrais biens dont la raison se saisit comme d’autant de points de repère pour se guider dans son travail.”

¹³⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 47 a. 6: “... prudentia, applicans universalia principia ad particulares conclusiones operabilium.”

from those who are wiser.”¹³⁵ While it is often impossible for an individual to perceive all the factors relevant to a particular situation and to discount all the factors that are irrelevant, the one who enjoys the Gift of counsel is thereby enabled to direct his actions to the end of eternal life, regardless of whether these actions are necessary for salvation or not.¹³⁶ In other words, in so far as final Beatitude is concerned he achieves an objective appraisal of particular practical states of affairs that confront him. While the finitude of the human condition may prevent an individual from weighing all the factors relevant to a particular situation, the Gift of counsel will nonetheless ensure that his appraisal accords with its overall complexion. The Gift of counsel therefore perfects the virtue of prudence since the Holy Spirit thereby brings the supreme rule of Eternal Reason to bear upon human reason.¹³⁷

In this way, human reason participates in divine prudence or providence, which is the Eternal Reason that governs “the whole community of the universe.”¹³⁸ God directs all things to their respective ends “not only as to constituent principles of species, but also as to the individualizing principles.”¹³⁹ In other words, God exercises His providential care over every individual thing in His creation. In this regard, His knowledge of things may be compared to the knowledge of art with regard to its artefacts: it orders all His created effects just as art orders all things that are wrought by it.¹⁴⁰ Divine providence therefore reaches the most intimate details of individual human existence and exercises its ordering force there – with

¹³⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 52 a. 1 ad 1: “[P]er quod homo dirigitur quasi consilio a Deo accepto. Sicut etiam in rebus humanis qui sibi ipsis non sufficiunt in inquisitione consilii a sapientioribus consilium requirunt.”

¹³⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 52 a. 4 ad 2.

¹³⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 52 a. 1.

¹³⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 91 a. 1: “[T]ota communitas universi.”

¹³⁹ *STh* I, q. 22 a. 2: “[O]mnia divinae providentiae subiacere, non in universali tantum, sed etiam in singulari.”

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: “[C]um cognitio eius comparetur ad res sicut cognitio artis ad artificata ... necesse est quod omnia supponantur suo ordini, sicut omnia artificata subduntur ordini artis.”

the proviso that we do not place obstacles in the way of the operation of grace. It must be emphasized that the ordering force of God's providence in human affairs is proportioned to the nature of human beings as rational and therefore as possessed of free-will. God's providence does not annul human freedom but rather operates through it. On account of his rational nature man is subject to divine providence in a special way in so far as he participates in God's providence by being provident both for himself and for others.¹⁴¹ Oliva Blanchette thus comments that "rational creatures, which constitute the historical order as distinct from the natural order in creation, have a privileged role to play in the order of providence."¹⁴²

The participation of human beings in God's providence is intimately bound up with the notion of predestination, for human beings are directed by divine providence to an end that exceeds their own natural capacity to attain, namely ultimate Beatitude. Not being able to gain eternal life by its own power, the rational creature must be led towards it, "directed, as it were, by God,"¹⁴³ in Whom the *ratio* of that direction pre-exists since "in Him is the type of the order of all things towards an end," which is what Thomas means by providence.¹⁴⁴ To say however that the *ratio* of the ordering of the rational creature towards eternal life pre-exists in the divine mind is to say that God predestines the rational creature to Beatitude. Although not evident in Thomas's discussion of predestination in the *Prima Pars*, the way in which God has predestined us to eternal life is through the Incarnation of the Son, on account

¹⁴¹ *STh* I-II, q. 91 a. 2: "[R]ationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subiacet, inquantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi et aliis providens."

¹⁴² Oliva Blanchette, *The Perfection of the Universe according to Aquinas: A Teleological Cosmology* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), p. 309.

¹⁴³ *STh* I, q. 23 a. 1: "[P]roprie loquendo, rationalis creatura, quae est capax vitae aeternae, perducitur in ipsam quasi a Deo transmissa."

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: "Cuius quidem transmissionis ratio in Deo praeexistit; sicut et in eo est ratio ordinis omnium in finem, quam diximus esse providentiam."

of which we have been adopted as His sons and daughters – a point that appears with particular force in Thomas’s Trinitarian theology and Christology. To be more precise, God has predestined those whom He has known from all eternity to be conformed to the image of His Son. Conformation to the Son, to be clear, is the end and effect of being predestined, not a prerequisite.¹⁴⁵ As Luc-Thomas Somme remarks, “[T]his conformity to the Son is the term and goal of the project of love to which God ... predestines us.”¹⁴⁶

The Gift of counsel is a manifestation of God’s providence whereby He predestines us to be conformed to His Son. The Gift of counsel and *imitatio Christi* are thus linked. Greater conformation to the example of Christ means in effect a greater assimilation of one’s knowing and willing to that of the Word incarnate, the concept of God’s eternal Wisdom. This greater assimilation of one’s knowing and willing to the example of Christ makes the rational creature tend more surely towards eternal Beatitude since it is at once an assimilation to divine Wisdom. It would be extraordinary to think that Thomas thought in terms of a slavish literal imitation of Christ’s historical example; rather, the kind of imitation involved is necessarily creative in the sense that the Christian must constantly confront situations that are not described in the Gospel accounts of Jesus’s life. Conformation to Christ – which is possible only by the grace of Christ working its transforming effect in the believer – thus

¹⁴⁵ *Ad Rom* c. VIII, lectio 6 [703]: “[Q]uos praescivit, hos et praedestinavit fieri conformes imaginis filii sui. Ut ista conformitas non sit ratio praedestinationis, sed terminus vel effectus. Dicit enim apostolus Eph. I, 5: *praedestinavit nos in adoptionem filiorum Dei*. Nihil enim aliud est adoptio filiorum quam illa conformitas. Ille enim qui adoptatur in filium Dei, conformatur vero filio eius.”

¹⁴⁶ Luc-Thomas Somme, *Fils adoptifs de Dieu par Jésus-Christ: la filiation divine par adoption dans la théologie de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris : Vrin, 1997), p. 71: “[C]ette conformité au Fils est le terme et le but du projet d’amour auquel Dieu ... nous prédestine.”

goes hand in hand with the Gift of counsel for the grace of Christ within us is the same as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the individual act of faith and with the idea of its increase. Increase in faith means that the intellect is more illumined by grace and entails a corresponding increase in understanding of the articles of faith. The knowledge by grace that flows from understanding of the articles of faith also increases concomitantly with increase of faith. The understanding and knowledge in question here are the graced understanding and knowledge that are counted among the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. While they primarily regard speculative matters, they nonetheless relate secondarily *per extensionem* to practical affairs. The Gift of understanding principally affords the believer a deeper intellectual penetration of the articles of faith while the Gift of knowledge confers right judgment concerning the ordering of limited goods towards eternal Beatitude. The theoretical knowledge of those goods that are properly ordered to the attainment of final Beatitude does not in itself confer the ability to reason correctly with regard to the means required to attain these goods. A further Gift, the Gift of counsel, is therefore necessary. This Gift pertains to the virtue of prudence, the end of which is set by rectitude of will. That rectitude of will that sets itself upon final Beatitude as its end can be imparted only by the theological virtue of charity.

In the notion of living faith and the notion of increase of faith, the will and its perfection by charity appears. The will, which is perfected by charity, surfaces again in relation to the Gift of counsel. This chapter has bracketed a systematic treatment of charity in order to concentrate on faith, which strengthens the intellect, and on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that pertain to the intellect/reason. This bracketing nevertheless entails a certain incompleteness in the considerations thus far on account of the dynamic reciprocity between

intellect and will that has been emphasized throughout this work. The following words from Reinhard Hütter, which presuppose Thomas's conception of the dynamic reciprocity obtaining between intellect and will, aptly express my own interpretation of the transformative effect of grace on moral judgment:

The decisive question seems to be, Is "judgment" simply a matter of the intellect as such, or does it somehow involve the will's operation – not just concerning the obvious case of external action but concerning the less obvious case of what one might call the mind's activity of judging? The "will" here addressed might better be described as reasoning's directedness – that which constitutes the horizon of the gaze in which judgments are made. This gaze is not just conceptual but volitional. Not only does the intellect move the will in light of particular judgments, but the will also exerts a constant impact on the intellect by directing it in light of the good to which the will is drawn. *"Rectitude of mind" indicates an intellect directed by the will that is drawn to the ultimate good.* Yet rather than remaining an abstraction, the ultimate good, the triune God, through efficacious grace, heals and redirects the will so that a fundamentally renewed mind "may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom 12:2). And for "discern" we could as well say "judge," since a renewal of discernment always issues in a renewal of judgment.¹⁴⁷

The task of the next two chapters is to further our understanding of this renewal of judgment in the light of Thomas's treatment of charity, the form of living faith, and of his teaching concerning another of the Holy Spirit's Gifts, namely wisdom.

¹⁴⁷ Hütter, "The Directedness of Reasoning," p. 171.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSPORTED BY CHARITY INTO THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIUNE GOD

At *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 *obj* 1, Thomas entertains the objection that only the Holy Spirit can be sent invisibly since an invisible mission must be according to the gift of grace and all gifts of grace pertain to the Holy Spirit.¹ In his response, he argues that while all the gifts are attributed to the Holy Spirit, those gifts that pertain to the intellect are nevertheless “appropriated in a certain way to the Son.”² Chapters six and seven have considered Thomas’s teaching in relation to faith, the theological virtue that strengthens the intellect, and those Gifts of the Holy Spirit that pertain to the intellect. In other words, they have dealt with the gifts of grace that are “appropriated in a certain way to the Son.”³ Faith perfects the human intellect and orders us towards ultimate Beatitude. As such it grants a participation in the divine life that constitutes our ultimate Beatitude. We have seen that the Gifts of

¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 *obj* 1: “Videtur quod filio non conveniat invisibiliter mitti. Missio enim invisibilis divinae personae attenditur secundum dona gratiae. Sed omnia dona gratiae pertinent ad spiritum sanctum, secundum illud I Cor. XII, *omnia operatur unus atque idem spiritus*. Ergo invisibiliter non mittitur nisi spiritus sanctus.”

² *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 1: “[L]icet omnia dona, inquantum dona sunt, attribuantur spiritui sancto, quia habet rationem primi doni, secundum quod est amor, ut supra dictum est; aliqua tamen dona, secundum proprias rationes, attribuantur per quamdam appropriationem filio, scilicet illa quae pertinent ad intellectum et secundum illa dona attenditur missio filii. Unde Augustinus dicit, IV de Trin., quod *tunc invisibiliter filius cuiquam mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur*.”

³ Ibid.: “[A]ttribuuntur per quamdam appropriationem filio.”

understanding, knowledge, and counsel, are necessary in order to render the operation of the intellect and will amenable to divine inspiration.

Chapters six and seven could not avoid some passing mention of the theological virtue of charity since we were concerned with living faith and living faith is informed by charity. The Gift of counsel, moreover, requires charity. In order to complete our examination of the hermeneutics of knowing and willing in Thomas we must now turn to a consideration of charity, the theological virtue that elevates the operation of the will, thereby enabling the Christian to participate in the love of the Holy Trinity. In particular we turn to the idea of charity as friendship, which friendship has been made possible by the Incarnation of the Word as a result of which the Father and the Son have sent the Holy Spirit as the first Gift in virtue of which the other Gifts are granted to us. The Holy Spirit conforms the believer to the dynamics of the Trinitarian life albeit in a mode proportioned to human nature. This conformation applies principally to the will which is the seat of charity, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us by grace. Chapter three has already discussed the relationship of dynamic reciprocity that obtains between intellect and will, the subject of faith and charity respectively. The third section of this chapter considers Thomas's understanding of the relationship between these two theological virtues as a preparation for a consideration of the hermeneutical implications of this relationship in the next chapter. In other words, it prepares for an appreciation of the epistemic import of the *imago Dei*'s analogical conformation to the life of Trinitarian knowing and loving. The second section aims to bring out the Scriptural inspiration for Thomas's thought in this regard by offering a brief account of some of the biblical texts upon which he draws and upon which he remarks in his Scriptural commentaries. This section also serves to underscore once again the Pneumatological, Christological, and Trinitarian inspiration of Thomas's treatment of faith and charity.

1. Established as friends of God by the Holy Spirit

While Thomas certainly draws significantly on Aristotle's treatment of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* in order to elucidate the notion of charity as the friendship of man for God, it is Scripture, particularly John 15:15, that governs his interpretation. Thus, in the *sed contra* of *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1, Thomas writes: "It is written (Jo. xv. 15): *I will not now call you servants ... but my friends*. Now this was said to them by reason of nothing else than charity. Therefore charity is friendship."⁴ As Anthony W. Keaty comments: "Here Thomas indicates that the paradigmatic case and indeed the source for the friendship love that he is calling charity is the friendship love exhibited by Christ."⁵ Keaty also shows how the citation from John 15:15 illuminates Thomas's discussion of the following article, *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 2, in which he insists on the voluntary nature of charity.⁶ According to Keaty's interpretation, "[T]he friend of the master, unlike the servant, grasps the end and appreciates the value of the end for which the master acts. Therefore, the friend of the master acts toward the master's

⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1 *sed contra*: "Ioan. XV dicitur, *iam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos meos*. Sed hoc non dicebatur eis nisi ratione caritatis. Ergo caritas est amicitia."

⁵ Anthony W. Keaty, "Thomas's Authority for Identifying Charity as Friendship: Aristotle or John 15," *The Thomist* 62 (1998), p. 593.

⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 2: "Non enim motus caritatis ita procedit a spiritu sancto movente humanam mentem quod humana mens sit mota tantum et nullo modo sit principium huius motus, sicut cum aliquod corpus movetur ab aliquo exteriori movente. Hoc enim est contra rationem voluntarii, cuius oportet principium in ipso esse, sicut supra dictum est. Unde sequeretur quod diligere non esset voluntarium. Quod implicat contradictionem, cum amor de sui ratione importet quod sit actus voluntatis. Similiter etiam non potest dici quod sic moveat spiritus sanctus voluntatem ad actum diligendi sicut movetur instrumentum quod, etsi sit principium actus, non tamen est in ipso agere vel non agere. Sic enim etiam tolleretur ratio voluntarii, et excluderetur ratio meriti, cum tamen supra habitum sit quod dilectio caritatis est radix merendi. Sed oportet quod sic voluntas moveatur a spiritu sancto ad diligendum quod etiam ipsa sit efficiens hunc actum."

ends in a more fully voluntary manner than does the servant.”⁷ In this regard it ought to be noted that friendship is essential to charity, a point that the citation from John 15:15 underscores. As Horvath puts it, “It is not a question of a symbol, or an image, but of an essential element of charity.”⁸

Notwithstanding the fact that Scripture is his primary inspiration in this instance, Thomas employs Aristotle’s reflections on friendship in order to shed light on the theological virtue of charity. In the light of Aristotle he affirms the following characteristics of friendship. Friendship entails benevolence when “we love someone so as to wish good to him.”⁹ Benevolence or well-wishing on its own, however, is not sufficient for friendship; a certain mutuality of love is required since “friendship is between friend and friend.”¹⁰ This mutual benevolence implies moreover some kind of communication. It is, in Thomas’s words, “founded on some kind of communication.”¹¹ Applying this logic to the question of charity, Thomas notes that God communicates His happiness to us and that there therefore obtains a communication between God and human beings. This comment is very succinct. Reference to the fifth reason that Thomas posits for the Incarnation at *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2, elaborates and clarifies it. The Incarnation grants us a full participation in the divine life, which constitutes our true happiness and the end of human life. More precisely, this

⁷ Keaty, “Thomas’s Authority for Identifying Charity as Friendship,” p. 600. On this interpretation any account of Thomas’s description of charity as friendship that regards his primary debt as being to Aristotle must be rejected. For one such interpretation see L. Gregory Jones, “The Theological Transformation of Aristotelian Friendship in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas,” *New Scholasticism* 61 (1987), pp. 373-99.

⁸ Horvath, *Caritas est in ratione*, p. 113: “Es handelt sich nicht um ein Symbol, oder um ein Bild, sondern um ein wesentliches Element der Gottesliebe.”

⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1: “[A]mamus aliquem ut ei bonum velimus.”

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: “[A]micus est amico amicus.” See *In Ethic* 8, 1. 2 [1559].

¹¹ *Ibid.*: “[F]undatur super aliqua communicatione.”

happiness “is bestowed upon us by Christ’s humanity.”¹² In brief, the Incarnation communicates to us the happiness of the triune God. As Torrell writes, “Charity initiates us into the good already possessed in common by the three persons of the Trinity, into their own life and bliss, and makes us participate in their ineffable exchange.”¹³

The notion of communion in the good (*communicatio in bono*) becomes clearer when we consider irrational creatures whom we cannot love with the love of charity, properly speaking.¹⁴ Benevolence towards an irrational animal is not possible because “it is not competent, properly speaking, to possess good, this being proper to the rational creature which, through its free-will, is the master of its disposal of the good it possesses.”¹⁵ Moreover, friendship is predicated upon fellowship of life with others for, as Thomas states, quoting Aristotle, “*nothing is so proper to friendship as to live together.*”¹⁶ Since fellowship in life is regulated by reason and irrational creatures lack reason, it follows that they cannot enjoy such fellowship. Hence, “friendship with irrational creatures is impossible, except metaphorically speaking.”¹⁷ In addition, there is the question of the fellowship of everlasting

¹² *STh* III, q. 1 a. 2: “[H]oc collatum est nobis per Christi humanitatem.”

¹³ Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 53.

¹⁴ For a discussion of the notion of *communicatio* in Thomas, see Joseph Bobik, “Aquinas on *communicatio*, the Foundation of Friendship and *Caritas*,” *Modern Schoolman* 64 (1988), 1-18; and, L.-B. Gillon, “A propos de la théorie thomiste de l’amitié: ‘*Fundatur super aliqua communicatione*’ (II-II, q. 23, a. 1),” *Angelicum* 25 (1948), 3-17.

¹⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 25 a. 3: “[N]on est eius proprie habere bonum, sed solum creaturae rationalis, quae est domina utendi bono quod habet per liberum arbitrium.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: “[N]ihil enim est ita proprium amicitiae sicut convivere” The quotation is from *NE* 8, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: “[N]ulla amicitia potest haberi ad creaturas irracionales, nisi forte secundum metaphoram.”

happiness upon which charity is based. Since reason is proper to charity, it follows that the friendship of charity towards irrational creatures is not possible.¹⁸

It is necessary to posit some kind of friendship based on the communication of divine Beatitude, particularly if we are guided by the 1 Cor 1:9 which states that “*God is faithful: by Whom you are called unto the fellowship of His Son.*”¹⁹ In his commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians Thomas explains that this fellowship is a fellowship “in the present life through the likeness of grace” and “in the future by sharing in His glory.” The path to sharing Christ’s glory in the future, however, necessarily entails suffering – a point that has a Scriptural basis: ““Provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (Rom 8:17).”²⁰ Perhaps there are intimations of suffering in Thomas’s responses to objections at *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1. Thus, just as we love all who belong to our friends because of our love for our friends themselves, so too in a like manner “the friendship of charity extends even to our enemies, whom we love out of charity in relation to God, to Whom the friendship of charity is chiefly directed.”²¹ As Torrell remarks: “Since charity is friendship, if

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, where Thomas nevertheless adds that “we can love irrational creatures out of charity, if we regard them as the good things that we desire for others, in so far, to wit, as we wish for their preservation, to God’s honor and man’s use; thus too does God love them out of charity” (“*Possunt tamen ex caritate diligere creaturae irrationales sicut bona quae aliis volumus, inquantum scilicet ex caritate volumus eas conservari ad honorem Dei et utilitatem hominum. Et sic etiam ex caritate Deus eas diligit*”).

¹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1: “[D]icitur I ad Cor. I, *fidelis Deus, per quem vocati estis in societatem filii eius.*”

²⁰ *Ad 1 Cor* I, lectio I [18]: “*Deus fidelis et absque ulla iniquitate, per quem vocati estis in societatem filii eius Iesu Christi domini nostri, ut scilicet habeatis societatem ad Christum, et in praesenti per similitudinem gratiae, secundum illud I Io. I, 7: si in luce ambulamur, sicut et ipse in luce est, societatem habemus cum eo ad invicem, et in futuro per participationem gloriae, Rom. VIII, 17: si compatimur, ut et simul glorificemur.*”

²¹ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1 ad 2: “[H]oc modo amicitia caritatis se extendit etiam ad inimicos, quos diligimus ex caritate in ordine ad Deum, ad quem principaliter habetur amicitia caritatis.”

charity does not find friendship, it creates it.”²² A similar argument is offered with regard to love for the vicious: for the sake of the virtuous person whom we love we also extend our love to those who belong to him and “in this way charity, which above all is friendship based on the virtuous, extends to sinners, whom, out of charity, we love for God's sake.”²³ In opening ourselves up in love to our enemies and to sinners we always risk harm and consequent suffering. Such suffering is however required for the attainment of eternal glory.

We have already encountered the idea that the wisdom of Christ crucified is the expression in the *oikonomia* of the Trinitarian God's eternal Wisdom and that to become more conformed to this eternal Wisdom requires that we be conformed to the crucified Christ. This theme will surface again in the treatment of charity later in this chapter. Here we note that the mutual benevolence that characterizes friendship between God and man is a benevolence that expresses itself in sacrifice for one's friend. The love of charity which is based on God's communication of His happiness to us in the Incarnation of His beloved Son is a sacrificial love that extends even to enemies and sinners.

If we refer back to Thomas's treatment of the invisible mission of the divine Person according to the Gift of sanctifying grace, we will recall that this “*charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us*”²⁴ according to the gift of grace which imbues the human soul with the logic of Trinitarian knowing and loving. Charity is in us “by the infusion of the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the

²² Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, p. 55.

²³ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1 ad 2: “[H]oc modo caritas, quae maxime est amicitia honesti, se extendit ad peccatores, quos ex caritate diligimus propter Deum.”

²⁴ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 ad 2: “[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

participation of Whom in us is created charity.”²⁵ Chapters six and seven have dealt with faith whereby “man in his intellective powers participates in the Divine knowledge.”²⁶ Faith thus assimilates the intellect to the Word. Here we are concerned with the will’s participation in divine love “through the virtue of charity.”²⁷ Charity assimilates the will to the Holy Spirit, the Love of the Father and the Son.

Since “charity is a certain friendship of man for God”²⁸ and since “*the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us*,”²⁹ it follows that we are established as friends of God by the Holy Spirit. Thomas makes this point explicitly at *ScG* IV, cc. 21 and 22, which deals with the effects attributed to the Holy Spirit in Scripture regarding the rational creature in so far as God’s gifts to us are concerned. In order to appreciate better Thomas’s doctrine in the *Summa Theologiae* it therefore makes sense to turn our attention to what he has to say in the *Summa contra Gentiles* concerning the Holy Spirit and our friendship with God. In this regard I will limit myself to *ScG* IV, c. 21, since it contains the material most relevant to the argument I wish to make.

With regard to the friendship with God that the Holy Spirit establishes in us Thomas quotes from Jn 15:15, just as he does in his discussion of whether charity is friendship at *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1: “I will not now call you servants but friends: because all things whatsoever I

²⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2: “[P]er infusionem spiritus sancti, qui est amor patris et filii, cuius participatio in nobis est ipsa caritas create.”

²⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 4: “[P]er potentiam intellectivam homo participat cognitionem divinam per virtutem fidei.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*: “[P]er virtutem caritatis.” See also *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 3 ad 3: “[C]aritas est ... participatio quaedam spiritus sancti.”

²⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1: “[C]aritas amicitia quaedam est hominis ad Deum.” My trans.

²⁹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 ad 2: “[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

have heard of My Father I have made known to you.”³⁰ Guided by this Scriptural text Thomas remarks that it is the proper mark of friendship to reveal one’s secrets to one’s friends. It is fitting therefore that we receive the revelation of the divine mysteries from the Holy Spirit as St. Paul intimates: “It is written that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love Him. But to us God has revealed them, by His Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:9-10).”³¹ In chapter five we saw Thomas employ 1 Cor 2:9 in relation to the theological virtues. His remarks on this verse in his commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians explain that the glorious vision of God lies beyond the capacity of sense and reason to attain. 1 Cor 2:10 indicates that this knowledge is however imparted by the Holy Spirit: “For since the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, inasmuch as He proceeds from the Son, Who is the truth of the Father, He is sent to those to whom He breathes the truth, as Matt (11:27) says: “No one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him”.”³² The Trinitarian character of the friendship that is charity is once again in evidence.

A unity of affection obtains between friends that makes the revelation of secrets to each other natural. This same unity requires however that a friend share whatever he possesses with his friend. Thomas quotes from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* in support of this understanding of friendship: “For, “since a man has a friend as another self,” he must

³⁰ ScG IV, c. 21 [5]: “Ioan. 15-15: *iam non dicam vos servos, sed amicos meos: quia omnia quae audivi a patre meo, nota feci vobis.*”

³¹ Ibid.: “[A]postolus dicit, I ad Cor. 2-9 *scriptum est quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se; nobis autem revelavit Deus per spiritum sanctum.*”

³² *Ad I Cor II*, lectio II [100]: “Quia enim spiritus sanctus est spiritus veritatis, utpote a filio procedens, qui est veritas patris, his quibus mittitur inspirat veritatem, sicut et filius a patre missus notificat patrem, secundum illud Matth. XI, 27: *nemo novit patrem nisi filius, et cui voluerit filius revelare.*”

help the friend as he does himself, making his own possessions common with the friend, and so one takes this as the property of friendship “to will and to do the good for a friend”.³³ More fundamental to Thomas’s considerations however is 1 Jn 3:17, which asks: “He who has the substance of this world, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his bowels from him: how does the charity of God abide in him?”³⁴ God Himself grants to us all that we need for His will is efficacious with regard to its effect. As we have seen already in chapter five in our discussion of *STh* I-II, q. 68, “it is fitting that all the gifts of God are said to be gifts from the Holy Spirit.”³⁵ The discussion of chapter two concerning Trinitarian knowing and loving was at pains to highlight that these many gifts showered upon the faithful by the working of the Holy Spirit in the *oikonomia* are rooted in the eternal procession of the Holy Spirit as Love.³⁶ These Gifts conform us analogically to the manner of knowing and loving of the divine Persons in a mode proportioned to human nature.

The Christian who is conformed to the dynamics of divine knowing and loving cannot guard these Gifts for himself alone for these Gifts emanate from the divine goodness and “it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others.”³⁷ Just as the Father communicates the fullness of the divine nature to the Son and the Father and the Son together communicate the plenitude of this nature to the Holy Spirit, so too the one Who is gifted with

³³ ScG IV, c. 21 [7]: “[Q]uia, cum homo amicum habeat ut se alterum, necesse est quod ei subveniat sicut et sibi sua ei communicans; unde et proprium amicitiae esse ponitur velle et facere bonum amico” The reference is attributed to Aristotle, *NE*, IX, 4 (1166a 32).

³⁴ Ibid.: “[S]ecundum illud I Ioan. 3-17: *qui habuerit substantiam huius mundi, et viderit fratrem suum necessitatem habentem, et clauserit viscera sua ab eo: quomodo caritas Dei manet in eo?*”

³⁵ Ibid.: “[C]onvenienter omnia dona Dei per spiritum sanctum nobis donari dicuntur.”

³⁶ *STh* I, q. 38 a. 2: “[A]mor habet rationem primi doni, per quod omnia dona gratuita donantur. Unde, cum spiritus sanctus procedat ut amor, sicut iam dictum est, procedit in ratione doni primi.”

³⁷ *STh* III, q. 1 a. 1: “Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet.”

a participation in this Trinitarian communication of knowing and loving is impelled by the very nature of this knowing and loving to share it with others. Hence the significance of Thomas's use of 1 Cor 12:8 at *ScG* IV, c. 21, for this verse does not simply refer to the Gifts of wisdom and knowledge given by the Spirit but rather to "the word of wisdom" and the "word of knowledge": "To one, indeed, by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, and to another, the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit."³⁸ According to Reginald of Piperno's *reportatio* on this verse, Thomas regarded the possession of these graces as being ordered towards the salvation of others. While we cannot work this salvation interiorly in other people since this belongs to God alone, we can nevertheless persuade others outwardly. Hence the word of wisdom is given so that by God's working we can lead others to faith.³⁹ To others is given knowledge so that they might lead others to faith by means of reasons derived from the created order.⁴⁰ Thus, Thomas expresses in distinctly Pneumatological terms in the *Summa contra Gentiles* what he says in the *Summa Theologiae* in terms of charity towards our neighbour being an expression of our love for God:

Now the aspect under which our neighbor is to be loved, is God, since what we ought to love in our neighbor is that he may be in God. Hence it is clear that it is specifically the same act whereby we love God, and whereby we love our neighbor. Consequently

³⁸ *ScG* IV, c. 21 [7]: "[S]ecundum illud I Cor. 12-8: *alii datur per spiritum sermo sapientiae; alii autem sermo scientiae secundum eundem spiritum*".

³⁹ *Ad 1 Cor* XII, versiculus 8: "[U]t ex parte Dei inducant homines ad fidem datur sermo sapientiae."

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*: "[Q]uibusdam autem datur ut inducant homines ad fidem per rationes ex creaturis sumptas, et hic vocatur scientia"

the habit of charity extends not only to the love of God, but also to the love of our neighbor.⁴¹

Understood in the light of our discussion of *ScG* IV, c. 21, however, it ought to be evident that the dynamics that inform Thomas's treatment of charity in the *Summa Theologiae* are Pneumatological and, indeed, Trinitarian even if this fact might not be immediately obvious from the language employed. Levering argues that on this point Thomas's perspective is rooted in his theology of creation. He writes: "We love our neighbours, including our enemies, because insofar as they exist, they participate in God the Trinity. We love them as creatures called to attain to the fullness of beatific participation in God the Trinity."⁴² The order of salvation in which charity and the Gifts are communicated and the order of creation both participate in their own way in the life of the Trinity.

To summarize. Charity is a supernatural virtue infused by God that enables the Christian to participate in the love of the Holy Trinity. It relates him in particular to the Person of the Holy Spirit even though as a created effect in the soul it is distinct from the Holy Spirit.⁴³ Central to Thomas's understanding of charity is the notion of friendship which in turn is based on the idea of communication. Friendship with the triune God has been made possible by the Incarnation of Christ Who has communicated divine Beatitude to us by means of his humanity. God has called us to final Beatitude in the fellowship of His Son, which call

⁴¹ *STh* II-II, q. 25 a. 1: "Ratio autem diligendi proximum Deus est, hoc enim debemus in proximo diligere, ut in Deo sit. Unde manifestum est quod idem specie actus est quo diligitur Deus, et quo diligitur proximus. Et propter hoc habitus caritatis non solum se extendit ad dilectionem Dei, sed etiam ad dilectionem proximi."

⁴² Matthew Levering, *The Betrayal of Charity: The Sins that Sabotage Divine Love* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2011), p. 8.

⁴³ See *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 2.

is necessarily impressed with the sign of the Cross. The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts by charity. Thomas quotes St. Paul in order to describe this invisible mission of the Holy Spirit as “*the charity of God*” being “*poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost Who is given to us.*”⁴⁴ The notion of being given recalls the idea of the Holy Spirit Who as Love is the first Gift (*donum*) in virtue of which the other Gifts (*dona*) are granted:

Hence it is manifest that love has the nature of a first gift, through which all free gifts are given. So since the Holy Ghost proceeds as love ... He proceeds as the first gift.

Hence Augustine says (De Trin. xv, 24): *By the gift, which is the Holy Ghost, many particular gifts are portioned out to the members of Christ.*⁴⁵

The experience of Trinitarian knowing and loving cannot remain locked up within the Christian; rather, the one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells by charity as His created effect necessarily seeks to communicate the experience of this Trinitarian knowing and loving to others. In this way the Christian’s experience of the Son and Holy Spirit truly mirrors the dynamics of the Trinitarian life in a mode proportioned to human nature.

In brief, in this section we have outlined Thomas’s conviction that charity is in us “by the infusion of the Holy Ghost, Who is the love of the Father and the Son, and the

⁴⁴ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 3 obj. 2: “[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

⁴⁵ *STh* I, q. 38 a. 2: “Unde manifestum est quod amor habet rationem primi doni, per quod omnia dona gratuita donantur. Unde, cum spiritus sanctus procedat ut amor ... procedit in ratione doni primi. Unde dicit Augustinus, XV de Trin., quod per donum quod est spiritus sanctus, multa propria dona dividuntur membris Christi.”

participation of Whom in us is created charity.”⁴⁶ Just as the intellect is conformed to the Word by faith, so too is the will conformed by charity to the Holy Spirit. In the last chapter we delineated the import of faith and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit that pertain to it for the life of intellect/reason. The next task – to be taken up in chapter nine – is to show forth the epistemic import of charity, that is to say, how for Thomas the indwelling of the Holy Spirit elevates not only the life of the will but also brings intellect/reason to a higher level than would be conceivable in its absence. In order to accomplish this task it is first of all necessary, however, to appreciate the nature of the relation that obtains between faith and charity.

Before examining the nature of the relation between faith and charity as portrayed by Thomas in the *Summa Theologiae*, we turn to a brief account of select passages in the Scriptural commentaries that inform his more systematic thinking. These passages help us to appreciate better the Pneumatological, Christological, and Trinitarian dynamics that fuel Thomas’s considerations of faith and charity as well as their interplay. Rom 5:5 is treated because we have previously encountered it and it is the text most frequently cited by Thomas in relation to the Holy Spirit. The other texts discussed in the next section are encountered in our subsequent treatment of the dynamic interplay between faith and charity.

2. Some Scriptural sources for Thomas’s treatment of charity

Thomas’s favourite quotation with regard to charity, taken from Rom 5:5, identifies charity with the infusion of the Holy Spirit into our hearts: “*The charity of God is poured*

⁴⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2: “[P]er infusionem spiritus sancti, qui est amor patris et filii, cuius participatio in nobis est ipsa caritas creata”

forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us.”⁴⁷ It is certainly an apt verse to quote in support of the notion that charity is infused in us by the Holy Spirit, which is the issue dealt with at *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2. In his commentary on St. Paul’s letter to the Romans Thomas notes that the expression, “the charity of God” can be understood in two ways. The first refers to the charity by which God loves us while the second concerns the charity with which we love God. According to both ways of understanding this expression, however, the charity of God is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us.⁴⁸ Charity grants us a participation in the life of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, in the Love of the Father and the Son. According to Thomas, for the Holy Spirit – Who is the Love of the Father and the Son – to be given to us is for us to be led into a participation in Love, Who is the Holy Spirit. And by this participation we are made lovers of God.⁴⁹ The Trinitarian character of charity could not be more strongly stated. Charity in effect draws us into the heart of the Trinitarian life of knowing and loving in which we ourselves participate by loving God.

The experience of the Gift of the Holy Spirit leads Thomas to claim that it is “clearly manifest”⁵⁰ that the charity by which God loves us has been poured into our hearts. This experience resonates with and finds warrant in the word of Scripture: “We know that God dwells in us.”⁵¹ This quotation is ostensibly taken from Jn 3:24 but the reference is mistaken. Thomas possibly intends to quote 1 Jn 4:13, which he cites in his commentary on Jn 6:57. 1

⁴⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2 *sed contra*: “[C]haritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

⁴⁸ *Ad Rom* V, lectio I [392]: “Utraque autem charitas Dei in cordibus nostris diffunditur per spiritum sanctum qui datus est nobis.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: “Spiritus enim sanctum, qui est amor patris et filii, dari nobis, est nos adduci ad participationem amoris, qui est spiritus sanctus, a qua quidem participatione efficimur Dei amatores.”

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: “[P]atenter ostensa.”

⁵¹ *Ibid.*: “Io. III, v. 24: in hoc scimus, quoniam manet in nobis Deus, etc.”

Jn 4: 13 reads: “We know that we abide in God and God in us, because he has given us his Spirit.”⁵² The charity which is poured into our hearts and by which we in turn love God extends to our conduct and perfects us in virtue as is clear from 1 Cor 13:4, which tells us that “Charity is patient, kind,” and so on.⁵³

At the end of his answer to the first objection at *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6, which article considers whether charity is the greatest of the theological virtues, Thomas quotes from Eph 3:19. In this text St. Paul talks about “*the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge*.”⁵⁴ The charity of Christ is manifested in the mystery of human redemption effected by Christ’s Incarnation: “For whatever occurred in the mystery of human redemption and Christ’s incarnation was the work of love.”⁵⁵ Thus, Christ was born out of charity as the same letter to the Ephesians attests: “For his exceeding charity wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together in Christ (Eph. 2:4-5).”⁵⁶ He died for us out of charity: ““Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13).”⁵⁷ Thomas then comments: “It follows that to know Christ’s love is to know all the mysteries of Christ’s Incarnation and our Redemption. These have poured out from the immense charity of God.”⁵⁸ Chapter four noted the Christological dimension of

⁵² *In Joh* VI, lectio VII [976]: “[I]n hoc cognoscimus quoniam in Deo manemus, et Deus in nobis, quia de spiritu suo dedit nobis.”

⁵³ *Ad Rom* V, lectio I [392]: “[D]icitur I Cor. XIII, 4: *charitas patiens est, benigna est, et cetera*.”

⁵⁴ See *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6 ad 1: “[S]ecundum illud ad Ephes. III, *supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi*.”

⁵⁵ *In Eph* III, lectio V: “[Q]uidquid est in mysterio redemptionis humanae et incarnationis Christi, totum est opus charitatis.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: “Supra II, 4: propter nimiam charitatem suam qua dilexit nos, etc.”

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*: “Io. XV, 13: maiorem hac dilectionem nemo habet, etc.”

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*: “Et ideo scire charitatem Christi, est scire omnia mysteria incarnationis Christi et redemptionis nostrae, quae ex immensa charitate Dei processerunt.”

grace. These remarks call attention to the Christological basis of charity. God's love that is poured forth into our hearts is mediated to us through the mysteries of Christ's Incarnation whereby our redemption has been effected. As Christological this love is also Trinitarian since the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit. Finally, Thomas notes that "the immense charity of God" is "a charity exceeding every created intelligence and the [combined] knowledge of all of them because it cannot be grasped in thought."⁵⁹ Although Thomas does not state so in this commentary this assertion, when applied to the relationship of dynamic reciprocity between intellect and will that he has elaborated, has implications for the life of intellect. The exalted intelligence that is engendered by charity can never, however, be separated from the Father and the Son as revealed to us in the economy of salvation: "For **the charity of Christ** is [the manifestation of] what God the Father has accomplished through Christ: "God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19)."⁶⁰

When arguing at *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 5, that charity is one virtue, Thomas bases himself on what he has earlier established with regard to faith: "[I]t is by faith that the intellect apprehends the object of hope and love."⁶¹ Thus, "Just as God is the object of faith, so is He the object of charity."⁶² He then appeals to the fact that faith is one virtue "by reason of the unity of the Divine truth"⁶³ and therefore concludes that "charity is also one virtue by reason of the Divine goodness."⁶⁴ Thomas's thought about the virtue of faith as one is overtly based

⁵⁹ Ibid.: "[O]mnem intellectum creatum et omnium scientiam, cum sit incomprehensibilis cogitatu."

⁶⁰ Ibid. : "[C]haritatem Christi, id est, quam Deus pater fecit per Christum. II Cor. V, 19: Deus erat in Christo mundum reconcilians sibi. "

⁶¹ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 4: "Per fidem autem apprehendit intellectus ea quae sperat et amat."

⁶² *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 5 *sed contra*: "[O]biectum fidei est Deus, ita et caritatis."

⁶³ Ibid.: "[P]ropter unitatem divinae veritatis."

⁶⁴ Ibid.: "Ergo etiam caritas est una virtus, propter unitatem divinae bonitatis."

on Eph 4:5, which talks of “*One faith*.”⁶⁵ In his commentary on the letter to the Ephesians, Thomas briefly elaborates two meanings that can be ascribed to the expression ‘one faith,’ the first of which is relevant to our considerations since it touches on the virtue of charity as well. According to this meaning we are called to believe the same set of truths and to live by the same moral code. His quotation from 1 Cor 1:10 is quite revealing: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak,” that is, think, “the same thing and that there be no schisms among you; but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment.”⁶⁶ We read in the *Summa Theologiae* that schism “is a special sin, for the reason that the schismatic intends to sever himself from that unity which is the effect of charity: because charity unites not only one person to another with the bond of spiritual love, but also the whole Church in unity of spirit.”⁶⁷ The sin of schism is at once a sin against charity and against ecclesial unity and is to be distinguished from heresy which is essentially opposed to faith. While lack of faith implies lack of charity so that whoever is a heretic is also a schismatic, the converse does not obtain. Thomas is nevertheless conscious of the implications of lack of charity for faith, an awareness that is informed by his reading of 1 Tim 1:6 which Thomas quotes and comments upon: “*From which things, i.e. charity and the like, some going astray, are turned aside into vain babbling*, so too, schism is the road to heresy.”⁶⁸ The quotation from Jerome that Thomas adds supports this interpretation: “Wherefore Jerome adds ... that *at the outset it is possible, in a certain respect, to find a*

⁶⁵ Ibid.: “[S]ecundum illud ad Ephes. IV, *una fides*.”

⁶⁶ In Eph IV, lectio II: “Unde I Cor. I, 10: idipsum dicatis, id est sentiatis, omnes, etc.”

⁶⁷ STh II-II, q. 39 a. 1: “[P]eccatum schismatis proprie est speciale peccatum ex eo quod intendit se ab unitate separare quam caritas facit.”

⁶⁸ STh II-II, q. 39 a. 1 ad 3: “[I]llud I ad Tim. I, *a quibus quidam aberrantes*, scilicet a caritate et aliis huiusmodi, conversi sunt in vaniloquium; ita etiam schisma est via ad haeresim.”

difference between schism and heresy: yet there is no schism that does not devise some heresy for itself, that it may appear to have had a reason for separating from the Church.”⁶⁹

The negative impact of schism on ecclesial unity offers negative testimony to the ecclesial nature of charity.

While other biblical texts inform Thomas’s treatment of charity, this brief survey of texts that are encountered either directly or indirectly in the next section forcibly underscore the notion that by charity we participate in the life of the Holy Spirit. Charity also has a Christological character – not surprisingly since the Holy Spirit is sent by the Son as well as by the Father. Charity is therefore also Trinitarian in character. The sin of schism bears witness to its ecclesial nature. The Pneumatological, Christological, Trinitarian, and ecclesial dimensions of charity ought therefore not to be forgotten in the next section and in the next chapter. In particular, Thomas’s favourite quotation concerning charity should be borne in mind: “*The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us.*”⁷⁰ Finally, the quotation from Eph 4:5 introduces the notion that faith and charity have some bearing on each other. In the next section we examine the nature of this mutual influence in greater detail.

According to Thomas’s construal, faith enjoys a structural priority over charity. Crucially, therefore, faith shapes the act of charity. This fact has implications for how we understand increase in charity since charity does not exist independently of faith. Charity nevertheless outstrips faith in that it unites the believer with God. The hermeneutical

⁶⁹ Ibid.: “Unde Hieronymus ibidem subdit quod *schisma a principio aliqua in parte potest intelligi diversum ab haeresi, ceterum nullum schisma est, nisi sibi aliquam haeresim confingat, ut recte ab Ecclesia recessisse videatur.*”

⁷⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 2 *sed contra*: “[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

implications of this fact will be taken up in the next chapter. All the while the Christological and the Pneumatological dynamics of faith and charity respectively ought not to be forgotten. The terms ‘faith’ and ‘charity’ should be understood as being imbued with the rich Trinitarian dynamics that we have been at pains to highlight throughout this work.

3. The dynamic interplay between faith and charity

All three theological virtues are infused together. Nevertheless, according to the order of generation whereby “matter precedes form, and the imperfect precedes the perfect,”⁷¹ faith precedes hope and charity with regard to their acts in a particular subject. The reason for this order of generation is as simple as it is important: “For the movement of the appetite cannot tend to anything, either by hoping or loving, unless that thing be apprehended by the sense or by the intellect.”⁷² Since “it is by faith that the intellect apprehends the object of hope and love,”⁷³ faith necessarily precedes hope and charity in the order of generation. As Sherwin points out, the love of charity presupposes the knowledge of faith yet goes beyond this knowledge to unite the Christian with the realities communicated in the propositions of faith.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, as he puts it, “faith retains a structural priority over charity by revealing charity’s object, even if only partially.”⁷⁵

⁷¹ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 4: “[M]ateria est prior forma, et imperfectum perfectio.”

⁷² *Ibid.*: “Non enim potest in aliquid motus appetitivus tendere vel sperando vel amando, nisi quod est apprehensum sensu aut intellectu.”

⁷³ *Ibid.*: “Per fidem autem apprehendit intellectus ea quae sperat et amat.”

⁷⁴ See *STh* II-II, q. 27 a. 3 ad 1; *STh* II-II, q. 27 a. 4; and *STh* II-II, q. 27 a. 4 ad 1.

⁷⁵ Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, p. 153.

One ought not to overstate the significance of this priority. Thus, while Thomas speaks in terms of faith showing the object of charity (*ostendit obiectum*),⁷⁶ he nonetheless never claims that faith specifies the act of charity. Thus, writes Sherwin, “Aquinas describes faith’s act as “showing” the object of charity, but refuses to characterize it as an act of specification ... Aquinas chooses his terms carefully in order to remain faithful to a unique aspect of faith’s influence on the will.”⁷⁷ Thomas maintains, rather, that “The object of charity is not knowledge itself ... [I]ts object is the thing known,”⁷⁸ namely God. The object of charity is God as He is in Himself and not as we know Him through faith that is proportioned to our finite human mode of being. More precisely, as Horvath makes clear, “The basis of our charity is God in Himself, that is to say, it is ultimately the love with which God loves Himself.”⁷⁹ Thomas’s comparison between prudence and the moral virtues, on the one hand, and faith and charity, on the other hand, is relevant to this point: “[P]rudence moderates the appetitive movements pertaining to the moral virtues, whereas faith does not moderate the appetitive movement tending to God, which movement belongs to the theological virtues: it only shows the object.”⁸⁰ Since the movement of charity towards its object surpasses all human knowledge – “according to Eph. 3:19: *The charity of Christ which*

⁷⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6 ad 1.

⁷⁷ Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, p. 154.

⁷⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 6 ad 2: “[C]aritas non habet pro obiecto ipsam cognitionem ... [H]abet pro obiecto ipsam rem cognitam.”

⁷⁹ Horvath, *Caritas est in Ratione*, p. 151: “Der Grund unserer Gottesliebe is Gott an sich, d.h. letztlich die Liebe, mit der Gott sich selbst liebt.”

⁸⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6 ad 1: “[P]rudencia moderatur motus appetitivos ad morales virtutes pertinentes, sed fides non moderatur motum appetitivum tendentem in Deum, qui pertinet ad virtutes theologicas; sed solum ostendit obiectum.”

surpasseth all knowledge”⁸¹ – faith cannot moderate it. Indeed, while faith and hope by their very nature imply a certain distance from God “since faith is of what is not seen, and hope is of what is not possessed,”⁸² the love of charity unites its possessor with God. Thomas explains:

[T]he love of charity is of that which is already possessed: since the beloved is, in a manner, in the lover, and, again, the lover is drawn by desire to union with the beloved; hence it is written (1 Jo. iv. 16): *He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him.*⁸³

Thomas provides support for the contention that charity is greater than faith: “It is written (1 Cor. xiii. 13): *The greater of these is charity.*”⁸⁴ He notes that while it is better to know things that are beneath the human soul than to love them, it is better to love things that are above us than to know them. In other words, although it is better to know the material world than to love it, it is better to love God than to know Him. Whatever is known exists in the intellect according to the intellect’s mode of being and the excellence of the intellectual operation receives its measure from the intellect itself. In contrast, the operation of the will and of every appetitive power is characterized by a tendency towards a thing as its term; consequently, “the excellence of the appetitive operation is gauged according to the thing

⁸¹ Ibid.: “[S]ecundum illud ad Ephes. III, *supereminentem scientiae caritatem Christi.*”

⁸² *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6: “[E]st enim fides de non visis, spes autem de non habitis.”

⁸³ Ibid.: “[A]mor caritatis est de eo quod iam habetur, est enim amatum quodammodo in amante, et etiam amans per affectum trahitur ad unionem amati; propter quod dicitur I Ioan. IV, *qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.*”

⁸⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 6 *sed contra*: “[D]icitur I ad Cor. XIII, *maior horum est caritas.*”

which is the object of the operation.”⁸⁵ Thus, it is better to know things below humans than to love them because things which are beneath humans are greater in the soul than they are in themselves and the human soul is degraded in loving them. In contrast, it is better for humans to love things above themselves rather than to know them since love unites them with the object loved, thereby exalting the dignity of their being.

While it is important not to overstate the significance of the structural priority of faith over charity, however, it is likewise imperative not to understate it. Faith certainly shapes the act of charity; indeed, the latter is impossible without it:

Faith, by its very nature, precedes all other virtues. For since the end is the principle in matters of action ... the theological virtues, the object of which is the last end, must needs precede all the others. Again, the last end must of necessity be present to the intellect before it is present to the will, since the will has no inclination for anything except in so far as it is apprehended by the intellect. Hence, as the last end is present in the will by hope and charity, and in the intellect, by faith, the first of all the virtues must, of necessity, be faith, because natural knowledge cannot reach God as the object of heavenly bliss, which is the aspect under which hope and charity tend towards Him.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 23 a. 6 ad 1: “[D]ignitas operationis appetitivae attenditur secundum rem quae est obiectum operationis.”

⁸⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 7: “Per se quidem inter omnes virtutes prima est fides. Cum enim in agibilibus finis sit principium ... necesse est virtutes theologicas, quarum obiectum est ultimus finis, esse priores ceteris virtutibus. Ipse autem ultimus finis oportet quod prius sit in intellectu quam in voluntate, quia voluntas non fertur in aliquid nisi prout est in intellectu apprehensum. Unde cum ultimus finis sit quidem in voluntate per spem et caritatem, in intellectu autem per fidem, necesse est quod fides sit prima inter omnes virtutes, quia naturalis cognitio non potest attingere ad Deum secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, prout tendit in ipsum spes et caritas.”

Thomas moreover claims that “vision is a cause of love.”⁸⁷ This causality ought not to be understood as efficient causality. As Horvath explains, “The efficient cause of grace and of the theological virtues is always God. If Thomas therefore speaks of faith as the cause of charity, then we must understand that in another sense. Thomas says: faith is the cause of charity by reason of knowledge.”⁸⁸ Knowledge should be taken to refer to the knowledge that faith imparts, a position that Thomas holds as early as his the commentary on the *Sentences*: “[I]t should be said that faith is a cause of charity by reason of the *knowledge* faith imparts.”⁸⁹

Since vision is a cause of love, it follows that “the more perfectly we know God, the more perfectly we love Him,”⁹⁰ even though, as Sherwin signals, “faith’s knowledge does not measure the quantity of charity’s act.”⁹¹ Nevertheless, as Pinckaers explains: “It is in faith that we receive the initial knowledge of the mystery of Christ and that the ties of charity are effected between Him and us by the work of the Holy Spirit. The whole development of the

⁸⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 6 ad 3: “[V]isio enim est quaedam causa amoris.”

⁸⁸ Horvath, *Caritas est in Ratione*, 151: “Die Wirkursache der Gnade und die der göttlichen Tugenden ist immer Gott. Wenn also Thomas vom Glauben als Ursache der Gottesliebe spricht, so müssen wir das in einem anderen Sinn verstehen. Thomas sagt: der Glauben ist Ursache der Gottesliebe auf Grund der Erkenntnis.”

⁸⁹ *In III Sent*, d. 31 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: “[F]ides est causa caritatis ratione cognitionis.”

⁹⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 67 a. 6 ad 3: “Deus autem quanto perfectius cognoscitur, tanto perfectius amatur.” See also *In I Cor.* XIII, lectio 3 [795]: “[C]haritas autem non cessat, sed magis perficitur, quia quanto perfectius cognoscetur Deus, tanto etiam perfectius amabitur.” This fact remains true in the case of the blessed in heaven, although the quantity of their charity is of a different kind to that of wayfarers. See *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 7 ad 3.

⁹¹ Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, p. 162.

spiritual life proceeds from this root.”⁹² The following description of faith’s causality from Horvath is worth quoting:

Through the understanding God enters the soul and through the will man moves towards God and gives himself entirely. In this earthly pilgrimage God comes to us through faith. Here on earth we receive God through faith. On the basis of this receptivity is faith the cause of charity. Faith consists in the fact that God is received by the believer as our Beatitude and charity in the fact that the believer is inclined to God as to his Beatitude. The more God enters into the soul as our Beatitude, the greater becomes the inclination and all the more does man wish to go towards his Beatitude.⁹³

In brief, increase in charity is predicated on an increase in faith. Increase in charity requires that God enter ever more and more by faith into our understanding, for “Charity is an answer

⁹² Servais-Théodore Pinckaers, O.P., *La vie selon l'Esprit: Essai de théologie spirituelle selon saint Paul et saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Cerf, 1996), p. 164 : “C’est dans la foi que nous recevons la connaissance initiale du mystère du Christ et que se nouent entre lui et nous les liens de la charité par l’œuvre de l’Esprit Saint. Tout le développement de la vie spirituelle procède de cette racine.”

⁹³ Horvath, *Caritas est in Ratione*, pp. 151-52: “Durch den Verstand tritt Gott in die Seele ein und durch den Willen wird der Mensch zu Gott hingehen und sich ganz hingeben. In der Pilgerschaft kommt Gott zu uns durch den Glauben. Hier auf Erden nehmen wir Gott durch den Glauben an. Auf Grund dieser Annahme ist der Glaube Ursache der Gottesliebe. Der Glaube besteht darin, daß Gott als unsere Seligkeit vom Gläubigen aufgenommen wird und die Gottesliebe darin, daß der Gläubige sich zu Gott als zu seiner Seligkeit hinneigt. Je mehr Gott als unsere Seligkeit in die Seele eintritt, desto größer wird die Hinneigung und desto mehr will der Mensch zu seiner Seligkeit hingehen.”

to God coming to us through faith.”⁹⁴ And God’s coming to us in faith is nothing other than His dwelling within us by His charity. Consequently, our knowledge in faith is a knowledge of God’s indwelling by charity. Greater belief entails an increased awareness of God’s love for us.⁹⁵

It will no doubt seem strange to a contemporary religious sensibility to introduce the notion of propositions into a discussion of charity. Nevertheless, I contend that the supremely synthetic nature of Thomas’s thought demands that we make this connection. In this regard, it ought to be borne in mind that the external word is simply an expression of the inner word uttered by the understanding, the same understanding that receives God in faith and seeks union with Him in charity. Chapter six highlighted Thomas’s emphasis on the role of propositions in bringing the believer into contact with the realities that they communicate: “The symbol brings one into contact with (*tanguntur*) the things about which faith is, in so far as the act of the believer is terminated in them.”⁹⁶ The mode in which God reveals His Truth to us, namely in propositions, is proportioned to the mode of human cognition. When faith shows its object to charity, it does so precisely in terms of these propositions, first and foremost in the context of the articles of the symbol and then in terms of other propositions derived from these articles. We ought not to forget either that these propositions, which distil and communicate the teaching of Scripture, are vouchsafed by the authority of the Church, the Body of Christ. Charity can therefore be said to be shown its object within the Tradition of the Church. By extension, the life of charity of the individual believer can therefore be said to be shaped in some way by the Church as a historical community of the faithful

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 152: “Die Gottesliebe ist eine Antwort an den durch den Glauben zu uns kommenden Gott.”

⁹⁵ See *ibid.*, pp. 152-3.

⁹⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 1 a. 2 ad 2: “[I]n symbolo tanguntur ea de quibus est fides inquantum ad ea terminatur actus credentis.” My trans.

(*congregatio fidelium*).⁹⁷ The mode of willing proper to the believer, elevated as it is by charity, is therefore marked by an ecclesial character at its very origins. The manner in which the faithful make their way to God as their Beatitude bears the impress of an ecclesial ethos, that is to say, insofar as the faithful sincerely immerse themselves in the life of the Church and seek to be formed by her teaching and practices as by Christ, Whose Body she is. Charity, of course, goes beyond faith and hope in being united with its object. Nevertheless, no matter how much charity may increase it must always retain its ecclesial character. Indeed, increase in charity is predicated upon this character. In so far as the believer falls away from the truths of the faith guaranteed by the authority of the Church, the ecclesial character of his charity is undermined.

When we say that the intellect ought to receive God's revelation on the authority of the Church and to show this revelation to the will which ought then to allow itself to be guided thereby, it ought to be borne in mind that the exercise of influence between intellect and will is however not simply unilateral. As has already been pointed out, the act of faith requires the act of charity in order for it to be perfect. Charity precedes faith and hope in the order of perfection because "faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues."⁹⁸ Thomas explains this quickening in terms of formal causality: charity is the form of faith. The end to which any act is directed specifies

⁹⁷ See Herwi Rikhof, "Thomas on the Church," 207-8: "First, the term [*congregatio fidelium*] clearly refers to the historical Church, to the Church *in via*, to the Church militant. The Church according to its earthly status is a *congregatio fidelium*, but according to its heavenly status *congregatio comprehendendum*. That is to say, when Thomas defines the Church as *congregatio fidelium* his focus is on the historical community of faith, but this concrete historical community is seen in the perspective of eternity due to the dynamics of faith, the *inchoatio beatitudinis*."

⁹⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 62 a. 4: "[T]am fides quam spes per caritatem formatur, et perfectionem virtutis acquirit."

that act. It can therefore be considered as the form of the act just as a form in a natural thing gives it its species. The form of any act, moreover, renders the act proportionate to its end.⁹⁹ Thomas has already shown that the act of faith is “an act of the intellect determinate to one object by the will’s command.”¹⁰⁰ The act of faith is therefore related both to the object of the intellect and to the object of the will, that is to say, both to the true and to the good/end. The good which is the end of faith is of course the divine Good, which is also the object of charity. Thomas therefore concludes that “charity is called the form of faith in so far as the act of faith is perfected and formed by charity.”¹⁰¹ In other words, “Faith works by love, not instrumentally, as a master by his servant, but as by its proper form.”¹⁰² As in the case of all the other virtues, charity leads faith to its [charity’s] end.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 3.

¹⁰⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 1: “[E]st intellectus determinati ad unum ex imperio voluntatis.”

¹⁰¹ *STh* II-II, q. 4 a. 3: “[C]aritas dicitur forma fidei, inquantum per caritatem actus fidei perficitur et formatur.” See also *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 8: “[I]n moralibus forma actus attenditur principaliter ex parte finis, cuius ratio est quia principium moralium actuum est voluntas, cuius obiectum et quasi forma est finis. Semper autem forma actus consequitur formam agentis. Unde oportet quod in moralibus id quod dat actui ordinem ad finem, det ei et formam. Manifestum est autem secundum praedicta quod per caritatem ordinantur actus omnium aliarum virtutum ad ultimum finem. Et secundum hoc ipsa dat formam actibus omnium aliarum virtutum. Et pro tanto dicitur esse forma virtutum, nam et ipsae virtutes dicuntur in ordine ad actus formatos.”

¹⁰² *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 6 ad 2: “[F]ides non operatur per dilectionem sicut per instrumentum, ut dominus per servum; sed sicut per formam propriam.”

¹⁰³ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 8 ad 3. See also *In III Sent.* d. 23, q. 3 a. 1 qa. 1: “Quia ergo fides, ut dictum est, est in intellectu secundum quod movetur a voluntate; ideo per caritatem, quae est perfectio voluntatis, formatur forma communis sibi et aliis virtutibus; tamen praeter eam habet formam specialem ex ratione proprii obiecti, et potentiae in qua est: et similiter consummationem per caritatem recipit.”

God enters the soul through faith just as in general “the beloved is said to be in the lover, inasmuch as the beloved abides in the apprehension of the lover.”¹⁰⁴ In turn, however, love impels the lover to seek an ever deeper knowledge of the beloved: “[T]he lover is not satisfied with a superficial apprehension of the beloved, but strives to gain an intimate knowledge of everything pertaining to the beloved, so as to penetrate into his very soul.”¹⁰⁵ Charity in particular fuels a desire to know God intimately: “Thus it is written concerning the Holy Ghost, Who is God’s Love, that *He searcheth all things, yea even the deep things of God* (1 Cor. ii. 10).”¹⁰⁶ According to Thomas, in his commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians, “The deep things are those which are hidden in Him [God] and not those which are known about Him through creatures.”¹⁰⁷ He explains that the Holy Spirit searches these deep things “not as though He learns them by searching them out, but because He knows fully even the most intimate details of all things.”¹⁰⁸ The love of charity transports the believer into these intimate depths of the inscrutable knowledge of the Trinitarian God. In other words, ecstasy is the effect of love.

Ecstasy places the one who suffers it outside himself and pertains both to the apprehensive power and to the appetitive power. With regard to the apprehensive power, ecstasy involves being placed outside the knowledge proper to rational animals. It might

¹⁰⁴ *STh* I-II, q. 28 a. 2: “[A]matum dicitur esse in amante, inquantum amatum immoratur in apprehensione amantis.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.: “[A]mans non est contentus superficiali apprehensione amati, sed nititur singula quae ad amatum pertinent intrinsecus disquirere, et sic ad interiora eius ingreditur.”

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.: “Sicut de spiritu sancto, qui est amor Dei, dicitur, I ad Cor. II, quod *scrutatur etiam profunda Dei*.”

¹⁰⁷ *Ad I Cor* II, lectio II [102]: “Dicuntur autem profunda ea quae in ipso latent, et non ea quae de ipso per creaturas cognoscuntur.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.: “Quod non est sic intelligendum, quasi inquirendo quomodo fiant, sed quia perfecte et etiam intima quarumlibet rerum novit”

indeed be something negative as when, in a fit of violent passion or madness, someone is “cast down into a state of debasement.”¹⁰⁹ In relation to our present concerns, however, ecstasy may result from one’s being raised to a higher knowledge. Thus, remarks Thomas, “a man is said to suffer ecstasy, inasmuch as he is placed outside the connatural apprehension of his sense and reason, when he is raised up so as to comprehend things that surpass sense and reason.”¹¹⁰ The role of love with regard to one’s being raised up to comprehend realities that transcend reason’s capacity to grasp is dispositive “in so far, namely, as love makes the lover dwell on the beloved ... and to dwell intently on one thing draws the mind from other things.”¹¹¹

Let us summarize what we have said thus far. While the theological virtues are infused together faith possesses a structural priority over charity in that it shows its object – namely God – to it. Charity nevertheless outstrips faith and hope for faith and hope imply a certain distance from God “since faith is of what is not seen, and hope is of what is not possessed,”¹¹² while charity unites one with God. It is moreover better to love God than to know Him since love unites one with the object loved. At the same time it must not be forgotten that faith shapes the act of charity. It can be said to be the cause of charity by reason of the knowledge that it imparts. Increase in charity is moreover predicated on increase in faith. Given the intimate connection between faith and charity and given the ecclesial nature of faith, as outlined in chapter six, we must also say that charity is necessarily ecclesial in nature. The will ought to be guided by the object shown to it by the intellect, namely God’s

¹⁰⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 28 a. 3: “[A]d inferiora deprimitur.”

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*: “[H]omo, dum elevatur ad comprehendenda aliqua quae sunt supra sensum et rationem, dicitur extasim pati, inquantum ponitur extra connaturalem apprehensionem rationis et sensus.”

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*: “[I]nquantum scilicet facit meditari de amato ... intensa autem meditatio unius abstrahit ab aliis.”

¹¹² *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6: “[E]st enim fides de non visis, spes autem de non habitis.”

revelation vouchsafed by the authority of the Church. It is not simply the case that faith in a sense causes charity, however, for charity is the form of faith since it provides faith with its end, namely the divine Good. The act of faith is thus related both to the object of the intellect and to the object of the will. Charity in effect impels the believer to know the triune God more intimately. Since it is ecstatic it transports the intellect into a mystery that transcends its capacity to grasp.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned to show how Thomas's teaching concerning the theological virtue of charity is intimately connected with his Trinitarian theology. This point can be all too easily missed by the reader who lacks a grasp of the broader context in which Thomas unfolds his teaching and, indeed, which is largely presupposed in the case of this theological virtue. Rm 5:5, a favourite text of Thomas's, sums up his understanding of charity: "*The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us.*"¹¹³ Faith, however, is structurally prior to charity just as the mission of the Son in His Incarnation precedes the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit. The pouring of charity into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, "*Who is given to us,*" depends upon faith in the Incarnate Word. On the other hand, charity precedes faith in the order of perfection. It is the form of living faith and as such specifies the act of faith and proportions it to its end, namely union with the Trinitarian God. The experience of Trinitarian knowing and loving cannot remain locked up within the one who possesses living faith, that is to say, a faith informed by charity; rather, the one in whom the Holy Spirit dwells by charity as His created effect necessarily seeks to communicate the experience of this Trinitarian knowing and loving to others. In this way the

¹¹³ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 5: "[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis."

Christian's experience of the Son and Holy Spirit truly mirrors the dynamics of the Trinitarian life in a mode proportioned to human nature.

It would seem on the basis of this chapter's deliberations that not only does a deepening of one's faith have implications for the life of charity but that increase of charity likewise exercises an important – albeit ineffable – influence on the life of faith. Given the reciprocity of influence that obtains between intellect and will, one can reasonably argue that the greater the degree of charity with which the believer is imbued, the greater the degree of intellectual illumination he enjoys. The experience of divinization occasioned by letting the Holy Spirit exercise ever greater control over one's willing unites one's will ever more closely with the Trinitarian God. The *imago Dei* is perfected through a progressive assimilation to the Word through the Holy Spirit. Given the dynamic reciprocity that characterizes the relationship between intellect and will, this divinization by the Holy Spirit necessarily has consequences for the life of intellect. The next chapter aims to elucidate this contention.

CHAPTER IX

BORNE BY CHARITY TO A STRANGE WISDOM

It would seem, on the basis of the discussion in chapter eight, that not only does a deepening of one's faith have implications for the life of charity, increase of charity likewise exercises an important – albeit ineffable – influence on the life of faith. Given the reciprocity of influence that obtains between intellect and will, one can reasonably argue that the greater the degree of charity with which the believer is imbued, the greater the degree of intellectual illumination he enjoys. I will offer further argumentation for this position in this chapter. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to clarify the notion of increase in charity. What is meant by increase in charity is a greater intensity in its act. The greater charity is, the more rooted it is in the soul, rendering it capable of acts of more fervent love. Increase in charity moreover effects a greater participation of the likeness of the Holy Spirit on the part of the soul. While charity can increase indefinitely it is nevertheless possible to speak of the perfection of charity in the case of a person who loves. This perfection constitutes the third of the three degrees of charity distinguished by Thomas: those of beginners, proficient, and the perfect. Compared to the beginner's egotistical desire, which undermines intellectual judgment, the perfect person's going forth from himself in the ecstasy of charity produces a certain intellectual illumination. Charity, that is to say, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul, in effect transports the human intellect into the realm of God's own Wisdom, Which Wisdom transcends the capacity of natural sense and reason.

The intellectual ecstasy occasioned by charity ought not to lead us to forget the Incarnation as the indispensable condition for the attainment of a wisdom that surpasses merely human wisdom. We participate in divine Wisdom by virtue of sharing in the likeness

of the only-begotten and natural Son of God by Whose Incarnation we have been adopted as children of God. Just as the Son is “the Word Who breathes forth love,”¹ this Love – namely the Holy Spirit – conforms us to the Word Who is the concept of God’s Wisdom. The Gift of wisdom communicated with the Gift of the Holy Spirit likens the soul to the Son. The soul’s manner of knowing and loving is conformed analogically to the Trinitarian mode of knowing and loving, thereby culminating in a cruciform form of wisdom. Enlightened by divine Wisdom, the Christian enjoys a vision of reality that is at odds with a merely worldly wisdom. Indeed, Christian wisdom appears to be mere folly in the eyes of worldly individuals since it results in ways of thinking and acting that are incomprehensible to an intellect unenlightened by the divine light.

1. Increase in charity

While Thomas does not explicitly draw out the epistemic and moral implications of the dynamic reciprocity obtaining between intellect and will in his account of charity his position is easily inferred from those articles in which he deals with the question of increase in charity. Because we are wayfarers on the way to God, “the last end of our happiness,”² our charity can indeed increase. Since our approach to God is of course not to be conceived in physical but rather in spiritual terms – in other words, we approach God “*not by steps of the body but by the affections of the soul*” – it must be “the result of charity, since it unites man’s mind to God.”³ If increase in charity were not possible, further advance along the way to ultimate Beatitude would be rendered impossible.

¹ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: “Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem.”

² *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4: “[U]ltimus finis nostrae beatitudinis.”

³ *Ibid.*: “[C]ui non appropinquatur passibus corporis, sed affectibus mentis. Hanc autem propinquitatem facit caritas, quia per ipsam mens Deo unitur.” Here Thomas is quoting from St Augustine, *Tract in Joh XXXII*.

An objection to Thomas's thesis serves to elucidate further precisely what is meant by increase in charity. In rejecting the notion that charity can increase this objection distinguishes between quantity as dimensive and quantity as virtual, ideas that are Dionysian in origin.⁴ Quantity understood as dimensive (*dimensiva*) can have nothing to do with charity which is a spiritual perfection. Virtual (*virtualis*) quantity, on the other hand, "regards the objects in respect of which charity does not increase, since the slightest charity loves all that is to be loved out of charity."⁵ Thomas allows that charity is not subject to dimensive quantity but rebuts the objection concerning virtual quantity because virtual quantity "depends not only on the number of objects, namely whether they be in greater number or of greater excellence, but also on the intensity of the act, namely whether a thing is loved more, or less."⁶ It is precisely according to the intensity of its act that charity can be said to increase. Such increase is essential to charity of the wayfarer otherwise it would not be possible to advance along the way to Beatitude. Increase of charity however allows us to advance towards God Who, as we have already seen Thomas say, "is approached, *not by steps of the body but by the affections of the soul.*"⁷ The notion of advancing towards God by charity is,

⁴ For a discussion of the notions of virtual quantity and virtual intensity of being in Thomas's thought, see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), pp. 156-74.

⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4 *obj* 1: "Virtualis autem quantitas attenditur secundum obiecta, secundum quae caritas non crescit, quia minima caritas diligit omnia quae sunt ex caritate diligenda."

⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4 ad 1: "Quae non solum attenditur secundum numerum obiectorum, ut scilicet plura vel pauciora diligantur, sed etiam secundum intensionem actus, ut magis vel minus aliquid diligatur."

⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4: "[C]ui non appropinquatur passibus corporis, sed affectibus mentis." Quotation from St. Augustine, *Tract. In Joh*, XXXII.

moreover, rooted in Scripture: “Hence the Apostle calls charity the way, when he says (1 Cor. xii. 31): *I show unto you yet a more excellent way.*”⁸

Recourse to the Aristotelian metaphysical notions of form, essence, accident and participation further deepens our understanding of what it means for charity to increase in intensity. In the treatise on grace Thomas argues that grace, as a quality of the soul, acts in the manner of a formal cause, just as whiteness makes something white. To be white is of course accidental to a thing; it does not constitute its essence. An accident “is said to belong to a being rather than to be a being.”⁹ Likewise in the case of grace: it cannot be a substance or a substantial form since it is above human nature; consequently, it must be an accidental form of the soul. Whatever is substantial in God becomes accidental in the soul which participates in the divine goodness. In this way, employing Aristotelian metaphysical constructs, Thomas is able at once to account for the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in the soul by grace whereby the soul is divinized and for the radical otherness of the Trinitarian God Who inhabits the soul.

As a function of grace, charity too is an accident – “its being is to be in something.”¹⁰ Thus, although we can talk about charity as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul, this assertion is not to be understood in terms of substantial form. Levering explains: “As a deeper participation in divine love, charity relates the human person in particular to the person of the

⁸ Ibid.: “[A]postolus caritatem viam nominat, dicens I ad Cor. XII, *adhuc excellentiorem viam vobis demonstro.*” The *reportatio* by Reginald of Piperno does not serve to elucidate the point at hand except in so far as the quotation from Prov 4:11 indicates a connection between charity and wisdom: “[E]xcellentiorem viam eundi ad Deum quam sint dicta dona *demonstrabo vobis*, scilicet caritatem: Is. XXX 21: *haec est via, ambulate*; Prov. IV 11: *viam sapientiae monstrabo.*”

⁹ *STh* I-II, q. 110 a. 2 ad 3: “[D]icitur esse entis quam ens.”

¹⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4 ad 3: “[E]ius esse est inesse.”

Holy Spirit, even though as a created effect in the soul, charity is not the same as the Holy Spirit.”¹¹ Since charity is an accident, it therefore cannot exist in its own right; it must necessarily inhere in a subject. The notion of increase in charity must consequently involve reference to the subject, that is to say, to the soul. To talk of an essential increase of charity means simply that “it is yet more in its subject, which implies a greater radication in its subject.”¹² This greater radication of charity in the soul imparts the ability “to produce an act of more fervent love.”¹³ The language of form, essence and accident is in effect employed to give expression to the point that Thomas has already made: increase in charity means a greater intensity in the act of charity, whereby God makes charity “to have a greater hold on the soul, and the likeness of the Holy Ghost to be more perfectly participated by the soul.”¹⁴ The following passage, which combines the Platonic notion of participation with the Aristotelian notion of form, gives eloquent expression to the point under discussion:

Accordingly, charity increases only by its subject partaking of charity more and more, i.e., by being more reduced to its act and more subject thereto. For this is the proper mode of increase in a form that is intensified, since the being of such a form consists wholly in adhering to its subject. Consequently, since the magnitude of a thing follows on its being, to say that a form is greater is the same as to say that it is more in its subject, and not that another form is added to it ... Therefore charity increases by

¹¹ Levering, *The Betrayal of Charity*, p. 5.

¹² *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 4 ad 3: “[N]ihil est aliud ipsam secundum essentiam augeri quam eam magis inesse subiecto, quod est eam magis radicari in subiecto.”

¹³ *Ibid.*: “[A]d producendum ferventioris dilectionis actum.”

¹⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 5 ad 3: “[M]agis insit, et ... perfectius similitudo spiritus sancti participetur in anima.”

being intensified in its subject, and this is for charity to increase in its essence; and not by charity being added to charity.¹⁵

The notion of participation captures the idea that, as Robert Johann tells us, “there is a distinction in creatures between themselves as actual and that by which they are actual.”¹⁶ Thomas proves that God is essentially being and essentially good. As the First Being it is “impossible that in God there should be any potentiality.”¹⁷ His essence is His existence.¹⁸ Having every kind of perfection by His own essence, He is good essentially.¹⁹ Everything else is called good and a being in so far as it participates in God’s goodness and being “by way of a certain assimilation.”²⁰ This participation, however, is “far removed and defective”²¹ according to “some sort of analogy,”²² for creatures cannot participate in God’s being and goodness according to the same specific or generic formality since God is not contained in

¹⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 5: “Sic ergo caritas augetur solum per hoc quod subiectum magis ac magis participat caritatem, idest secundum quod magis reducitur in actum illius et magis subditur illi. Hic enim est modus augmenti proprius cuiuslibet formae quae intenditur, eo quod esse huiusmodi formae totaliter consistit in eo quod inhaeret susceptibili. Et ideo, cum magnitudo rei consequitur esse ipsius, formam esse maiorem hoc est eam magis inesse susceptibili, non autem aliam formam advenire ... Sic igitur et caritas augetur per hoc quod intenditur in subiecto, et hoc est ipsam augeri secundum essentiam, non autem per hoc quod caritas addatur caritati.”

¹⁶ Robert O. Johann, *The Meaning of Love: An Essay towards a Metaphysics of Intersubjectivity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1954), p. 52.

¹⁷ *STh* I, q. 3 a. 1: “Impossibile est igitur quod in Deo sit aliquid in potentia.” See also I, q. 2 a. 3.

¹⁸ *STh* I, q. 3, a. 4.

¹⁹ *STh* I, q. 6 a. 3.

²⁰ *STh* I, q. 6 a. 4: “[P]er modum cuiusdam assimilationis.”

²¹ *Ibid.*: “[R]emote et deficienter.”

²² *STh* I, q. 4 a. 3: “[S]ecundum aliqualem analogiam.”

any genus. Thus can Johann rightly assert that “the search of creatures for that by which they are rendered actual and perfect, a principle of goodness inherent in themselves, is really a search for an analogue of the divine goodness” while God Himself is “the transcendent and inaccessible term of all *becoming*.”²³

Following his discussion of whether charity increases through every act of charity, Thomas moves on to ask whether it increases indefinitely before then asking whether it can be perfect in this life. There is a certain progression in the questions posed in these articles from increase of charity to indefinite increase to perfection. With regard to the question of indefinite increase in charity, Thomas answers in the affirmative.²⁴ He offers three reasons, the first two pertaining to God and the third pertaining to the human subject. With regard to God Thomas first of all points out that since charity participates in the infinite charity, namely the Holy Spirit, it therefore can have no limits to its increase. It is always possible to participate more in what is infinite. The second reason is not unrelated to the first in that the notion of infinity figures again, this time with regard to the divine power: God, Who causes increase in charity, possesses infinite power. Thirdly, there can be no limit to increase of charity even on the part of the human subject since with an increase in charity is received a corresponding increased capacity for further growth in charity. This third reason, while it concerns the human subject, is not unconnected with the first two reasons. Indefinite increase in a habit is not possible by human effort: divine assistance is required.

The divine indwelling by charity enlarges the heart thereby rendering it capable of further increase: “The capacity of the rational creature is increased by charity, because the heart is enlarged thereby, according to 2 Cor. vi. 11: *Our heart is enlarged*; so that it still

²³ Johann, *The Meaning of Love*, p. 52.

²⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 7.

remains capable of receiving further increase.”²⁵ Thomas’s remarks on this verse in his commentary on St. Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians makes clear the connection between desiring God and enlargement of heart. In contrast, “when a person cares for nothing but earthly things and scorns the heavenly, not being able to grasp them with his mind,”²⁶ his heart is narrow. In other words, the person who is fixated on worldly things necessarily lacks charity. It follows therefore that renunciation of worldly goods is a means to cultivate charity, a view held by Thomas, as will be seen below.

Notwithstanding the capacity for indefinite increase possessed by charity, it is possible to speak of the perfection of charity in this life – as in the case of St. Paul, whom Thomas mentions.²⁷ This perfection may be understood in two ways: firstly, with regard to the object loved; secondly, with regard to the person who loves. The first kind of perfection must be ruled out in the case of charity for it requires that God be loved as much as He is lovable. God, however, is infinitely lovable and so “no creature can love Him infinitely since all created power is finite.”²⁸ God alone can possess that perfect charity with which He loves Himself. The chasm between God’s infinite being and the finitude of human beings, which Thomas has safeguarded by his recourse to the metaphysical notion of accidental form when discussing grace and charity, is once again clearly asserted. In whatever sense we can ascribe

²⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 7 ad 2: “[C]apacitas creaturae spiritualis per caritatem augetur, quia per ipsam cor dilatatur, secundum illud II ad Cor. VI, *cor nostrum dilatatum est*. Et ideo adhuc ulterius manetabilitas ad maius augmentum.”

²⁶ *Ad II Cor* II, lectio 3 [230]: “[C]um quis non curat nisi de terrenis, et contemnit caelestia, non valens ea intellectu capere.”

²⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 8 *sed contra*: “Augustinus dicit, super Prim. Canonic. Ioan., *caritas cum fuerit roborata, perficitur, cum ad perfectionem pervenerit, dicit, cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo*. Sed hoc possibile est in hac vita, sicut in Paulo fuit. Ergo caritas in hac vita potest esse perfecta.”

²⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 8: “Nulla autem creatura potest eum diligere infinite, cum quaelibet virtus creata sit finita.”

perfection of charity to the human subject, this perfection can only fall infinitely short of the perfect charity with which God loves Himself, that is to say, the Holy Spirit, the bond of love between the Father and the Son and Who shares the same divine nature as them.

With regard to the person who loves, perfection of charity happens when he loves as much as he can. Thomas cites three ways in which this comes to pass. The first way involves a man's heart being always actually directed towards God. This is possible however only for those who are in heaven where they behold the divine essence. As Thomas explains in the treatise on Beatitude, no one who beholds the divine essence can wish not to behold it.²⁹ On the contrary, all the elect in heaven always think actually of God and are borne by love towards him. The weakness that accompanies the human condition in this life prevents this state of affairs from obtaining here. We are beset "by ignorance on the part of the intellect", by "inordinate affection on the part of the appetite," and by "penal ties on the part of the body."³⁰ These factors all too often interfere with our perception of the true good and therefore with our attainment of what conduces to true happiness in this life and of what directs us towards ultimate Beatitude.

The second way in which charity is perfected requires one to pay only as much attention to the needs of the present life as is necessary in order to dedicate one's efforts to God and to divine things. While this perfection of charity is possible for the wayfarer, it is not common to all who possess charity. In all likelihood Thomas has in mind the profession of the evangelical counsels, which "are directed to the removal of things that hinder the act of charity, and yet are not contrary to charity, such as marriage, the occupation of worldly

²⁹ See *STh* I-II, q. 5 a. 4; and *STh* I-II, q. 3 a. 8.

³⁰ *STh* I-II, q. 5 a. 3: "Multis enim malis praesens vita subiacet, quae vitari non possunt, et ignorantiae ex parte intellectus, et inordinatae affectioni ex parte appetitus, et multiplicibus poenalitibus ex parte corporis."

business, and so forth.”³¹ Elsewhere Thomas distinguishes between the commandments of the New Law which pertain to “matters that are necessary to gain the end of eternal bliss, to which end the New Law brings us forthwith,”³² and counsels which concern “matters that render the gaining of this end more assured and expeditious.”³³ The nature of eternal Beatitude surfaces once again. If a man makes the things of this world his end and looks upon them “as the reason and rule of all he does,” he necessarily turns away from spiritual goods.³⁴ Fulfilment of the commandments deals with this disorder, ordering him towards eternal Beatitude. In this regard, a man does not need to forego the things of this world completely: one can make use of created things without placing one’s end in them and thus attain to final Beatitude. He can however reach this end more expeditiously “by giving up the goods of this world entirely,”³⁵ bearing in mind that this renunciation is not an end in itself but rather ought to serve as a means to cultivate charity.³⁶

The third way in which charity is perfected comes to pass when “a man gives his whole heart to God habitually, viz., by neither thinking nor desiring anything contrary to the

³¹ *STh* II-II, q. 184 a. 3: “[C]onsilia autem ordinantur ad removendum impedimenta actus caritatis, quae tamen caritati non contrariantur, sicut est matrimonium, occupatio negotiorum saecularium, et alia huiusmodi.”

³² *STh* I-II, q. 108 a. 4: “[P]raecepta novae legis intelligantur esse data de his quae sunt necessaria ad consequendum finem aeternae beatitudinis, in quem lex nova immediate introducit.”

³³ *Ibid.*: “Consilia vero oportet esse de illis per quae melius et expeditius potest homo consequi finem praedictum.”

³⁴ *Ibid.*: “Qui ergo totaliter inhaeret rebus huius mundi, ut in eis finem constituat, habens eas quasi rationes et regulas suorum operum, totaliter excidit a spiritualibus bonis.”

³⁵ *Ibid.*: “[E]xpeditius perveniet totaliter bona huius mundi abdicando.”

³⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 184 a. 3: “[I]nstrumentaliter perfectio consistit in consiliis. Quae omnia ... ordinantur ad caritatem.”

love of God.”³⁷ This habitual giving of one’s heart to God is common to all who have charity. In other words it is common both to consecrated persons and to those who do not renounce marriage, the pursuit of worldly occupations, and so on. Given the ordering of this response – which begins with the perfection of God’s charity and then proceeds to comment on the perfection of the charity of the elect in heaven, the perfection of charity possible in this life, and finally the perfection common to all who possess charity – the perfection common to all who have charity might be construed to be situated at the bottom of the hierarchy of perfection in charity. Included in this category are those who have not forgone such things as marriage and the preoccupations of worldly affairs, which pursuits, while not contrary to charity, nonetheless hinder it.³⁸

The discussion concerning the perfection of charity in this life may seem to be at odds with the prior discussion of the possibility of indefinite increase in the charity of the wayfarer. As Thomas expresses this point in an objection, “what is already perfect cannot be perfected any more. But in this life charity can always increase ... Therefore charity cannot be perfect in this life.”³⁹ In response, Thomas argues that “The perfection of the way is not perfection simply (*simpliciter*), wherefore it can always increase.”⁴⁰ In other words, the perfection in question is not perfection absolutely speaking but rather relatively speaking (*secundum quid*). The meaning of Thomas’s response can be elucidated by reference to an

³⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 8: “[H]abitualiter aliquis totum cor suum ponat in Deo, ita scilicet quod nihil cogitet vel velit quod sit divinae dilectioni contrarium.”

³⁸ See *STh* II-II, q. 108 a. 3: “[C]onsilia autem ordinantur ad removendum impedimenta actus caritatis, quae tamen caritati non contrariantur, sicut est matrimonium, occupatio negotiorum saecularium, et alia huiusmodi.”

³⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 8 *obj.* 3: “[I]llud quod iam perfectum est non habet ulterius crescere. Sed caritas in hac vita semper potest augeri ... Ergo caritas in hac vita non potest esse perfecta.”

⁴⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 8 ad 3: “[P]erfectio viae non est perfectio simpliciter. Et ideo semper habet quo crescat.”

earlier comment to the effect that “charity increases by being intensified in its subject, and this is for charity to increase in its essence; and not by charity being added to charity.”⁴¹ Since each increase in charity is in effect an increase in its essence it follows that, before any increase, charity is perfect according to its present essence. In other words since it is perfect according to its essence, any particular intensity of charity possesses an ability to receive further increase in its very essence.⁴² Implicit here is the notion of virtual quantity whereby charity is measured according to the intensity of its act. Before increase, charity can attain to that maximum degree of intensity which constitutes its perfection. After increase, it can attain to a greater degree of intensity, which greater degree of intensity now constitutes its perfection. Obviously increase in essence cannot mean that charity becomes something other than charity. It is precisely to the increase of intensity in the act of charity that it refers.

It is clear that for Thomas increase of charity is not only possible but that it is indispensable if one is to advance along the path towards Beatitude. This increase is to be understood in terms of a greater intensity in the act of charity. It denotes a greater rootedness of charity in the soul so that it is capable of producing an act of more fervent love. Increase in charity also means that the likeness of the Holy Spirit is participated more perfectly by the soul; it entails an assimilation to God’s goodness. While charity can increase indefinitely we can nonetheless speak of perfection of charity on the part of the person who loves. Any increase of charity causes an increase in its essence; consequently, before any increase, charity can be said to be perfect according to its present essence.

⁴¹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 5: “[C]aritas augetur per hoc quod intenditur in subiecto, et hoc est ipsam augeri secundum essentiam, non autem per hoc quod caritas addatur caritati.”

⁴² See *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 7: “Similiter etiam ex parte subiecti terminus huic augmento praefigi non potest, quia semper, caritate excrescente, superexcrescit habilitas ad ulterius augmentum.”

Thomas completes his discussion of increase of charity by distinguishing three degrees thereof: that of beginners, proficient, and the perfect. In the next section we pass on to a consideration of these three degrees and their correlation with intellectual illumination. We have already commented on the shaping of charity – and therefore of the manner of human willing – by the faith. Given the intimate and inextricable reciprocity of influence between faith and charity, on the one hand, and likewise of the faculties that they elevate, namely intellect and will, on the other hand, it is reasonable to posit that increase in charity in its turn entails some kind of heightened intellectual awareness.

We will see that disordered desire undermines the life of intellect/reason while its rectification entails a certain intellectual illumination. The degree of intellectual enlightenment is correlative to the extent to which one succeeds in overcoming egocentric desires, which success can be described as a going forth from oneself in ecstasy. The third degree of charity entails the desire to be free of all else in order to be united with Christ Who is God's Word, that is to say, God's eternal concept of Wisdom. Charity thus draws the human intellect into the domain of God's own Wisdom, Which Wisdom transcends the capacity of natural sense and reason. The Holy Spirit bestows upon the believer a certain "connaturality" with divine things so that his reason can judge correctly concerning them and, in the light of these divine things, can judge correctly concerning human acts. This kind of judgment pertains to the Gift of wisdom with which the subsequent section will be concerned.

2. Increase in charity and intellectual illumination

In completing his deliberations at *STh* II-II, q. 24, concerning increase in charity, Thomas concurs with the idea that three degrees can be distinguished, namely the beginning

of charity, its progress and its perfection. These degrees are distinguished “according to the different pursuits to which man is brought by the increase of charity.”⁴³ Thomas continues:

For at first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed: in the second place man’s chief pursuit is to aim at progress in good, and this is the pursuit of the proficient, whose chief aim is to strengthen their charity by adding to it: while man’s third pursuit is to aim chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God: this belongs to the perfect who *desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*.⁴⁴

The division of the spiritual life into three stages by Thomas is nothing new: it has its roots in the patristic tradition. Drawing from this tradition, however, Thomas elaborates this idea with what Pinckaers describes as “his habitual clarity and concision.”⁴⁵ One might add moreover that the three degrees of charity delineated by Thomas correspond with the three ways found in later mystical writings. The purgative way corresponds to that of beginners,

⁴³ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 9: “[D]istinguuntur secundum diversa studia ad quae homo perducitur per caritatis augmentum.”

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*: “Nam primo quidem incumbit homini studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent. Et hoc pertinet ad incipientes, in quibus caritas est nutrienda vel fovenda ne corrumpatur. Secundum autem studium succedit, ut homo principaliter intendat ad hoc quod in bono proficiat. Et hoc studium pertinet ad proficientes, qui ad hoc principaliter intendunt ut in eis caritas per augmentum roboretur. Tertium autem studium est ut homo ad hoc principaliter intendat ut Deo inhaereat et eo fruatur. Et hoc pertinet ad perfectos, qui cupiunt dissolvi et esse cum Christo.”

⁴⁵ Pinckaers, *La vie selon l’Esprit*, p. 196: “S. Thomas reprend ces idées de la tradition spirituelle. Il les expose et approfondit avec sa clarté et sa concision habituelles.”

the illuminative way to that of progressives, and the unitive way to union with and enjoyment of God.⁴⁶

The first degree of charity, according to Thomas, involves avoiding sin and resisting those concupiscences which move the Christian “in opposition to charity.”⁴⁷ Lest the discussion that follows give the wrong impression, it ought to be noted that although Thomas clearly has disordered *amor concupiscentiae* in mind here, rightly ordered *amor concupiscentiae* is a great good. Cessario explains:

Concupiscence signifies willing a good to oneself, or a desire for what is good for the subject. Since it is implanted in us by the author of nature and continues to function even under the reign of grace, this sort of wanting forms part of a well-ordered life. By loving this way, humans seek authentic goods, particularly those things that are predominantly useful or delightful goods.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ See *ibid.*: “La voie purgative, liée aux détachements et aux purifications, convient aux débutants. La voie illuminative comporte des grâces de lumière, notamment dans l’oraison, et suppose une expérience spirituelle propre aux progressants. La voie unitive se distingue par une union à Dieu consommée, souvent comparée au mariage, et par une intimité de vie avec le Christ qui assure la maturité de cet amour. Chez les mystiques, ces étapes de la vie spirituelle seront plutôt du point de vue de l’action de Dieu dans l’âme, selon que, par sa grâce, il opère en l’âme purification, illumination et union.”

⁴⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 9: “Nam primo quidem incumbit homini studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent.”

⁴⁸ Romanus Cessario, O.P., “The Theological Virtue of Hope (IIa IIae, qq. 17-22),” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. by Pope, p. 237.

Like any act of the sensitive appetite, concupiscence operates under the political control of reason.⁴⁹ As a result of original sin it is however within the power of concupiscence to resist and to undermine the judgment of reason.⁵⁰ Thomas's comments concerning the first degree of charity in which concupiscences move one in opposition to charity obviously refer to concupiscence according to its negative potential in the wake of original sin: "[A]t first it is incumbent on man to occupy himself chiefly with avoiding sin and resisting his concupiscences, which move him in opposition to charity: this concerns beginners, in whom charity has to be fed or fostered lest it be destroyed"⁵¹ This first degree of charity corresponds to the active night of sense famously described by St. John of the Cross in the *Ascent of Mount Carmel*. André Bord, in commenting on the active night of sense in St. John of the Cross writes: "If the beginner wishes to find Love again, the union of love with God, he must break with all false loves. This is the object of the *active night of the sense*."⁵² In what

⁴⁹ See *STh* I, q. 81 a 3 ad 2: "[S]icut philosophus dicit in I politicorum, *est quidem in animali contemplari et despoticum principatum, et politicum, anima quidem enim corpori dominatur despotico principatu; intellectus autem appetitui, politico et regali* ... Intellectus autem, seu ratio, dicitur principari irascibili et concupiscibili politico principatu, quia appetitus sensibilis habet aliquid proprium, unde potest reniti imperio rationis."

⁵⁰ See *STh* I-II, q. 82 a. 3 ad 1.

⁵¹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 9: "[Pr]imo quidem incumbit homini studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent. Et hoc pertinet ad incipientes, in quibus caritas est nutrienda vel fovenda ne corrumpatur."

⁵² André Bord, *Les amours chez Jean de la Croix* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1998), p. 39: "Si le *commençant* veut retrouver l'Amour, l'union d'amour avec Dieu, il doit rompre avec tous les faux amours: c'est l'objet de la *nuît active du sens*." See also Ross Collings, O.C.D., *John of the Cross* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 64: "[I]t is of the utmost importance to recall all that we have said concerning the true ascetical meaning of "mortification of the desires and denial of pleasures in all things" (*Asc.* I, 4, 1). It does not aim at insensibility ... but rather at liberating the soul from the dark prison of self-centred gratification, a freedom to choose the true good."

follows we focus on Thomas's comments concerning this negative aspect of concupiscence in order to highlight the positive epistemic impact of charity.

Thomas comments in no uncertain terms about the effects of disordered concupiscence on the possibility of fulfilling one's cognitive potential. The pleasures that attend the attainment of sensual objects have the capacity to hinder the use of reason. Thomas enumerates three ways in which they can furnish an impediment to our functioning as cognitive agents. Firstly, if we pay too much attention to them, they can distract reason. As Thomas points out, "when the attention is firmly fixed on one thing, it is either weakened in respect of other things, or it is entirely withdrawn from them; and thus if the bodily pleasures be great, either it entirely hinders the use of reason, by concentrating the mind's attention on itself; or else it hinders it considerably."⁵³ Secondly, points out Thomas, pleasures can hinder our capacity to reason by virtue of their being contrary to reason. For some pleasures, especially when they are excessive, are contrary to the order of reason. It is in this sense that Thomas, following Aristotle, maintains that "*bodily pleasures destroy the estimate of prudence, but not the speculative estimate, to which they are not opposed, for instance that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles.*"⁵⁴ It ought to be noted, however, that the dynamics of distraction proper to the first way enumerated by Thomas hinder both the estimate of prudence and that of speculation. Thirdly, pleasures can undermine our ability to function as cognitive agents by fettering the reason "in so far as bodily pleasure is followed by a certain alteration in the body, greater even than in the other

⁵³ *STh* I-II, q. 33 a. 3: "[C]um autem attentio fortiter inhaeserit alicui rei, debilitatur circa alias res, vel totaliter ab eis revocatur. Et secundum hoc, si delectatio corporalis fuerit magna, vel totaliter impedit usum rationis, ad se intentionem animi attrahendo; vel multum impedit."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*: "[D]electiones corporales corrumpunt existimationem prudentiae, non autem existimationem speculativam, cui non contrariantur, puta quod triangulus habet tres angulos aequales duobus rectis."

passions, in proportion as the appetite is more vehemently affected towards a present than towards an absent thing.”⁵⁵ Thomas instances the case of drunkards “in whom the use of reason is fettered or hindered”⁵⁶ on account of the inebriating effects of alcohol.

When we link these considerations concerning the debilitating epistemic effects of disordered concupiscence with Thomas’s comments about ecstasy, it becomes apparent that the more one succeeds in rectifying one’s disordered desires by bringing them increasingly under the political rule of reason informed by the dynamics of faith and charity, the more intellectually enlightened one becomes with regard to the true goal of human existence and the proper means to its attainment. The love of disordered concupiscence is tainted with egocentrism. It does afford ecstasy in a certain sense to the one who loves “in so far, namely, as not being satisfied with enjoying the good that he has, he seeks to enjoy something outside himself.”⁵⁷ The person who is concupiscent in a disordered way seeks however to possess the extrinsic good for himself and therefore, in the final analysis, does not go out from himself. The movement of concupiscible desire finally remains within him, for by his appetitive power “a person is in himself, when he cares only for things that are his own; but he is made to be outside himself when he does not care about things that are his own, but about things that pertain to others; and this is the work of charity: “Love does not insist on its own way” (1

⁵⁵ Ibid.: “[I]n quantum scilicet ad delectationem corporalem sequitur quaedam transmutatio corporalis, maior etiam quam in aliis passionibus, quanto vehementius afficitur appetitus ad rem praesentem quam ad rem absentem.”

⁵⁶ Ibid.: “[H]abent usum rationis ligatum vel impeditum.”

⁵⁷ *STh* I-II, q. 28 a. 3: “[I]n quantum scilicet, non contentus gaudere de bono quod habet, quaerit frui aliquo extra se.”

Cor. 13:5).”⁵⁸ For Thomas, the absence of ecstasy on account of being imprisoned by the life of sensual desire has as a necessary concomitant a dimming of the intellectual light. The corollary of this assertion is that one’s degree of intellectual illumination is essentially linked to the extent to which one habitually transcends one’s egotistical horizons. The beginner in charity must however constantly struggle with the distractions of disordered concupiscence and, consequently, with clouded intellectual judgment. The following comment from Thomas Merton could well be applied to Thomas’s understanding of the dynamics of the spiritual life: “Everybody knows that passion blinds the intelligence. Prejudice is the fruit of inordinate desire. When the truth is not what we want it to be, we twist its image out of shape in our mind to fit the pattern of our desires.”⁵⁹

Ecstasy, properly speaking, is caused by love of friendship for, according to the dynamics of the love of friendship, “a man’s affection goes out from itself simply; because he wishes and does good to his friend, by caring and providing for him, for his sake.”⁶⁰ Charity, as love of friendship with God, furnishes the ultimate form of ecstasy in this life. The more one goes forth according to the dynamics of this ecstasy from one’s egocentric concerns and loves God for His own sake, the less spiritual energy can be consumed by the desire of disordered concupiscence. Battle against threats to charity is nevertheless still required in the case of the one who is proficient in charity albeit not to the same extent as in the case of

⁵⁸ *Ad II Cor XII*, lectio 1 [447]: “Per appetitivam enim virtutem homo est solum in se ipso, quando curat quae sunt sua tantum. Efficitur vero extra se ipsum, quando non curat quae sua sunt, sed quae perveniunt ad bona aliorum, et hoc facit charitas. I Cor. c. XIII, 4: charitas non quaerit quae sua sunt.”

⁵⁹ Thomas Merton, *The Ascent to Truth* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1951), p. 42.

⁶⁰ *STh I-II*, q. 28 a. 3: “[A]ffectus alicuius simpliciter exit extra se, quia vult amico bonum, et operatur, quasi gerens curam et providentiam ipsius, propter ipsum amicum.”

beginners, whose chief concern is “to resist the sins which disturb them by their onslaught.”⁶¹ Subsequently, however, they feel this onslaught less and thus “they begin to tend to perfection with greater security.”⁶² There is, as Pinckaers writes, a pursuit of “progress towards spiritual perfection centred on charity.”⁶³ Labour and combat are nevertheless involved “with one hand doing the work, and the other holding the sword as related in 2 Esdr. iv. 17 about those who built up Jerusalem.”⁶⁴ Thomas is not explicit about the enemies against which the proficient must combat but it is reasonable to speculate that they include the other finite goods, or rather the disordered desire thereof, that Thomas dismisses at *STh* I-II, q. 2, as objects of true Beatitude – in brief, all created goods, including those of the soul. The disturbance occasioned by the constant combat against disordered concupiscence with regard to these goods necessarily undermines charity’s movement towards deeper union with God. The intellect cannot keep its attention firmly fixed on God all the time as its final end. While its judgments are indeed illumined by the divine light, the attacks of its disordered desires deflect its attention away from this light. Thus, while the judgments of proficientes concerning those things that lead to final Beatitude are more to be trusted than those of beginners, they are nevertheless prone to error.

Pinckaers perceptively points out the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount for those who are proficient in charity, obviously hinting at Thomas’s discussion of whether the New

⁶¹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 9 ad 2: “[P]rincipalior tamen cura imminet ut resistant peccatis, quorum impugnatione inquietantur.”

⁶² *Ibid.*: “[I]am quasi securius ad profectum intendunt.”

⁶³ Pinckaers, *La vie selon l’Esprit*, p. 198: “[L]e progrès vers une perfection spirituelle centrée sur la charité.”

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*: “[E]x una tamen parte facientes opus, et ex alia parte habentes manum ad gladium, ut dicitur in Esdra de aedificatoribus Ierusalem.”

Law directs man sufficiently with regard to interior action.⁶⁵ In this teaching Our Lord “orders man’s interior movements, first in regard to man himself, secondly in regard to his neighbour.”⁶⁶ With respect to man himself, Our Lord in the first place prescribes that he ought to refrain not only from external acts that are evil in themselves but also “from internal acts and from the occasions of evil deeds.”⁶⁷ In the second place He directs our intention in order that we do not seek human praise or earthly riches. With respect of our neighbour the Lord forbids us on the one hand “to judge him rashly, unjustly, or presumptuously,” and on the other hand “to entrust him too readily with sacred things if he be unworthy.”⁶⁸ Finally, Thomas draws attention to Our Lord’s reference to the role of prayer of petition: the Lord teaches us that in order to fulfil the teaching of the Gospel we must implore the help of God. At the same time we must at once seek perfect virtue and avoid evil influences. We must moreover “observe His commandments.” In other words, we must appropriate his teaching, moulding our knowing and willing accordingly. Indeed, the whole of the Sermon on the Mount draws us into the *imitatio Christi*. As Pinckaers writes, it orders the movement of our heart and of our spirit in conformity with the love of God according to the model of the Father’s generosity and according to the love of neighbour even to the extent of loving one’s

⁶⁵ Pinckaers, *La vie selon l’Esprit*, p. 198.

⁶⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 108 a. 3: “[O]rdinat interiores hominis motus, primo quidem quantum ad seipsum; et deinde quantum ad proximum.”

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*: “[O]rdinat hominis voluntatem ... ut scilicet abstineat aliquis non solum ab exterioribus operibus quae sunt secundum se mala, sed etiam ab interioribus, et ab occasionibus malorum.”

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: “Consequenter autem ordinat interiorem hominis motum quoad proximum, ut scilicet eum non temerarie aut iniuste iudicemus, aut praesumptuose; neque tamen sic simus apud proximum remissi, ut eis sacra committamus, si sint indigni.”

enemies and praying for one's persecutors."⁶⁹ Indeed, the whole of this teaching determines the distinctive character of Christian knowing and willing. The New Law provides the matrix within which Christian knowing and willing unfolds. It in effect constitutes the wellspring of truly Christian consciousness and action. It furnishes, to borrow the words of Pinckaers, "the loving word that arouses an authentic and generous love."⁷⁰

The third degree of charity pertains to union with and enjoyment of God. Those who advance this far "*desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ*."⁷¹ The struggle with egocentrism and the tendency to seek satisfaction in the goods of this world is overcome by an overriding desire to break free of the confines of disordered and egocentric desire in order to be united with Christ. Thomas is clearly speaking here about final Beatitude, the desire for which is overriding: fuelled by this third degree of charity, man aims "chiefly at union with and enjoyment of God."⁷² Elsewhere, Thomas tells us that charity "properly speaking, makes us tend to God, by uniting our affections to Him so that we live not for ourselves, but for God."⁷³ Thomas's specific mention of union with Christ is significant. As we saw in chapter four, human reason is perfected in wisdom "by participating in the Word of God, as the disciple is instructed by receiving the word of his master." In other words, "the Word is a

⁶⁹ Pinckaers, *La vie selon l'Esprit*, p. 198: "[L]e Sermon sur le montagne ... nous apprend, selon S. Thomas ... à ordonner les mouvements de notre cœur et de notre esprit conformément à l'amour de Dieu, sur le modèle de la générosité du Père, et selon l'amour du prochain poussé jusqu'à l'amour des ennemis et à la prière pour les persécuteurs."

⁷⁰ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Passions et Vertu* (Éditions Parole et Silence, 2009), p. 28: "[U]ne parole aimante qui suscite l'amour authentique et généreux."

⁷¹ *STh* II-II, q. 24 a. 9: "[C]upiunt dissolvi et esse cum Christo."

⁷² *Ibid.*: "[H]omo ad hoc principaliter intendat ut Deo inhaereat et eo fruatur."

⁷³ *STh* II-II, q. 17 a. 6 ad 3: "[P]roprie facit tendere in Deum uniendo affectum hominis Deo, ut scilicet homo non sibi vivat sed Deo."

concept of the eternal Wisdom, from Whom all man's wisdom is derived.”⁷⁴ Again, as we saw in chapter four, it is through imitating the example of Christ incarnate that the disciple is assimilated to the concept of eternal Wisdom. The practice of *imitatio Christi* has profound epistemic significance. In the light of the present discussion we can say that it ultimately draws the disciple into the third degree of charity where “a man is said to suffer ecstasy, inasmuch as he is placed outside the connatural apprehension of his sense and reason, when he is raised up so as to comprehend things that surpass sense and reason.”⁷⁵ Because of the union of operation of intellect and will, the third degree of charity brings the human intellect with it into ontological territory that completely transcends its capacity to know by those means that are connatural to it, namely concepts, since concepts are intrinsic to the connatural apprehension of reason.

The kind of knowledge entailed by the ecstasy that accompanies the third degree of charity brings human knowing to its highest possible realization in this life, a realization that is predicated upon the life of faith and charity and which lies beyond the natural capacity of the human intellect. It clearly represents the culmination of a certain kind of knowledge, knowledge “whereby a man experiences in himself the taste of God's sweetness, and complacency in God's will.”⁷⁶ This knowledge is described as affective or experimental

⁷⁴ *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8: “[V]erbum est conceptus aeternae sapientiae a qua omnis sapientia hominum derivatur. Et ideo homo per hoc in sapientia proficit, quae est propria eius perfectio prout est rationalis, quod participat verbum Dei, sicut discipulus instruitur per hoc quod recipit verbum magistri.” See also *In Joh* XIV, lectio 2 [1869]: “Et quia nullus potest veritatem cognoscere nisi adhaereat veritati, oportet omnem qui veritatem cognoscere desiderat, huic verbo adhaerere”; and *In Joh* XIV, lectio 2 [1868-1869].

⁷⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 28 a. 3: “[H]omo, dum elevatur ad comprehendenda aliqua quae sunt supra sensum et rationem, dicitur extasim pati, inquantum ponitur extra connaturalem apprehensionem rationis et sensus.”

⁷⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 ad 2: “Alia autem est cognitio divinae bonitatis seu voluntatis affectiva seu experimentalis, dum quis experitur in seipso gustum divinae dulcedinis et complacentiam divinae voluntatis.”

(*affectiva seu experimentalis*). This reasoning is informed by two Scriptural texts that Thomas cites: “[I]t is written (Ps. xxxiii. 9): *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet*, and (Rom. xii. 2): *That you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God*.”⁷⁷

In his commentary on Psalm 33:9, Thomas briefly reflects on the nature of the experience afforded by the senses. The senses can be distinguished with regard to the experience they afford. Sight, smell, and hearing grant us experience of objects that are situated at a distance from us while touch and taste come into play for objects that are close. Touch and taste are distinguished from each other in that touch senses the outside of an object while taste senses the inside. Since God dwells within us, it can be said that “the experience of divine goodness is called tasting,”⁷⁸ a contention in support of which Thomas invokes further Scriptural warrant: “[A]s 1 Peter 2 says: *but if you taste how sweet*, etc. And at the end of Proverbs: *She tasted and saw that her dealings were good*.”⁷⁹ The psalm communicates a twofold effect of this experience of divine goodness, namely “the certitude of understanding and the security of love.”⁸⁰ According to Thomas the certitude of understanding is denoted by the verb ‘to see’. In the physical world of course we must see something before we can taste it. In the spiritual world, however, the opposite is the case, for in this world “one who does not taste does not know.”⁸¹ Consequently, the psalmist “says first *taste* and then *see*,”⁸² and

⁷⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 *obj.* 2: “[D]icitur enim in Psalm., *gustate, et videte quoniam suavis est dominus*; et Rom. XII, *ut probetis quae sit voluntas Dei bona et beneplacens et perfecta*.”

⁷⁸ *In psalmos* XXXIII [9]: “Et ideo experientia divinae bonitatis dicitur gustatio”.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*: “1 Pet. 2: si tamen gustatis quam dulcis etc. Prov. ult. gustavit et vidit, quoniam bona est negotiatio ejus.”

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*: “Unus est certitudo intellectus, alius securitas affectus.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*: “[I]n rebus spiritualibus prius gustatur, postea autem videtur; quia nullus cognoscit qui non gustat.”

⁸² *Ibid.*: “[I]deo dicit prius, *gustate*, et postea, *videte*.”

the effect of what we see is “*how sweet is the lord.*”⁸³ Other passages in Scripture offer warrant for this interpretation. In Wisdom 12 we read, “*O lord, how good and sweet is your spirit in us!*” and in Psalm 30, “*How great is the abundance of your sweetness.*”⁸⁴

Thomas’s commentary on Rom 12:12, “*That you may prove what is the good, and the acceptable, and the perfect will of God,*”⁸⁵ invokes the analogy of sense experience in order to explain judgments that are rightly attuned to the good and those that are not so attuned. According to this analogy a person whose sense of taste is infected does not enjoy right judgment concerning different tastes; rather, he detests those that are sweet while he desires those that are hateful. In contrast, the person who is blessed with a healthy sense of taste also enjoys right judgment concerning objects of taste. In an analogous way, a person whose affectivity is as it were conformed to things of this world does not possess right judgment about the good. On the other hand, the one who has a rightly ordered and healthy affectivity because his sensuality has been renewed by grace has right judgment with regard to the good.⁸⁶ It is for this reason that St. Paul exhorts us not to be conformed to this age but to be

⁸³ Ibid.: “[Q]uoniam suavis est dominus.”

⁸⁴ Ibid.: “[O] quam bonus et suavis est domine spiritus tuus in nobis. Ps. 30: quam magna multitudo dulcedinis tuae.”

⁸⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 obj. 2: “[U]t probetis quae sit voluntas Dei bona et beneplacens et perfecta.”

⁸⁶ *Ad Rom* XII, lectio I [967]: “[S]icut homo qui habet gustum infectum, non habet rectum iudicium de saporibus sed ea quae sunt suavia interdum abominatur, ea vero quae sunt abominabilia appetit, qui autem habet gustum sanum, rectum iudicium de saporibus habet; ita homo qui habet corruptum affectum quasi conformatum rebus saecularibus, non habet rectum iudicium de bono; sed ille qui habet rectum et sanum affectum, sensu eius innovato per gratiam, rectum iudicium habet de bono.”

reformed by assuming the form and beauty of mind that is effected by the grace of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁷

Since the possession of charity also means the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – “*The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us*”⁸⁸ – it follows that the knowledge “whereby a man experiences in himself the taste of God’s sweetness, and complacency in God’s will”⁸⁹ accompanies the mission of the Holy Spirit. While Thomas unfortunately does not offer us any discussion in the *Summa Theologiae* concerning this affective or experimental knowledge which is communicated to us in our experience of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, he does broach this question in his commentary on Peter Lombard’s *Sentences*. There he refers to this knowledge as *quasi experimentalis*.⁹⁰ What he writes, moreover, tallies with what we have seen him say in the *Summa Theologiae* about charity, which is of course the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This kind of *quasi experimentalis* knowledge comes by way of a Gift that is appropriated to a divine Person, “through which we are united to God according to the mode proper to that Person, that is to say, through love, when the Holy Spirit is given.”⁹¹ Thanks to the mission of the Holy Spirit which communicates the fullness of divine love, “grace overflows into the

⁸⁷ Ibid. : “Monet ergo apostolus ut reformemur, id est, iterato formam et decorem mentis assumamus, quem nostra mens habuit, quod quidem fit per gratiam spiritus sancti.”

⁸⁸ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 5: “[C]aritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus nostris per spiritum sanctum, qui datus est nobis.”

⁸⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 ad 2: “Alia autem est cognitio divinae bonitatis seu voluntatis affectiva seu experimentalis, dum quis experitur in seipso gustum divinae dulcedinis et complacentiam divinae voluntatis.”

⁹⁰ *In I Sent*, d. 14 q. 2 a. 2 ad 3. For an exegesis of this phrase, see Albert Patfoort, O.P., “*Cognitio ista est quasi experimentalis* (I *Sent.*, dist. 14, q. 2, a. 2, ad 3m),” *Angelicum* 63 (1986), pp. 3-13.

⁹¹ *In I Sent*, d. 14 q. 2 a. 2 ad 3: “[A]ccipitur ex aliquo dono appropriato personae, per quod efficitur in nobis conjunctio ad Deum, secundum modum proprium illius personae, scilicet per amorem, quando spiritus sanctus datur.”

mind,” the effect of which overflow is “experimental knowledge of that divine Person by the one to whom the mission is made.”⁹² This experimental knowledge affords the taste of God’s sweetness and complacency in His will.⁹³

Without recourse to the notion of *cognitio (quasi) experimentalis*, it would be difficult to distinguish the knowledge of the Trinitarian missions granted by faith and charity from the knowledge that the Holy Spirit proceeds from another possessed by one who lacks living faith. In other words, the fact that the temporal procession is according to sanctifying grace would be called into question.⁹⁴ This kind of knowledge that results from charity, that is to say, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, bestows upon the recipient a “sympathy or connaturality for Divine things,”⁹⁵ on the basis of which reason can judge aright about them and of human acts in their light. This kind of judgment, which is a function of both faith and charity, “belongs to wisdom as a gift of the Holy Ghost.”⁹⁶ Pinckaers is therefore correct in his assertion that the third degree of charity which the perfect inhabit is characterized by “the

⁹² *In I Sent*, d. 16 q. 1 a. 2: “[I]n missione invisibili spiritus sancti ex plenitudine divini amoris redundat gratia in mentem, et per illum effectum gratiae accipitur cognitio illius personae divinae experimentalis ab ipso cui fit missio.” See also *In I Sent*, d. 15, q. 2 a. 1 ad 5: “[Q]uamvis cognitio approprietur filio, tamen donum illud ex quo sumitur experimentalis cognitio, quae necessaria est ad missionem, non necessario appropriatur filio, sed quandoque spiritui sancto, sicut amor”; and, *In Joh I*, lectio 15 [292]: “[H]abitatio Dei, sive gloriae, sive gratiae, agnosci non potest nisi per experientiam: nam verbis explicari non potest.”

⁹³ See *STh II-II*, q. 97 a. 2 ad 2.

⁹⁴ *In I Sent*, d. 14 q. 2 a. 2 arg. 3: “[S]ecundum Augustinum, mitti est cognosci quod ab alio sit. Sed aliquis sine gratia gratum faciente potest cognoscere spiritum sanctum ab alio esse per fidem informem. Ergo videtur quod processio temporalis non semper sit secundum donum gratum faciens.”

⁹⁵ *STh II-II*, q. 45 a. 2: “[C]ompassio sive connaturalitas ad res divina.” For a magisterial study of knowledge through connaturality or inclination that confines itself to the strictly philosophical plane, see Caldera, *Le jugement par inclination chez saint Thomas d’Aquin*.

⁹⁶ *STh II-II*, q. 45 a. 2: “[P]ertinet ad sapientiam secundum quod donum est spiritus sancti.”

predominant action of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which dispose us to receive His impulses and to act with a perfection that goes beyond the bounds of natural reason as when someone is carried by a special inspiration towards a life of poverty, chastity, or forgiveness, as St. Thomas's interpretation of the Beatitudes at *STh* I-II, q. 69 a. 3 shows.”⁹⁷ In mentioning the idea of graced reason transcending the limits of natural reason we are running a little bit ahead of ourselves in the terms of the present argument. The next section, which deals with the Gift of wisdom in relation to intellect and will, will traverse the necessary logical steps in order to appreciate how Christian wisdom perfects human knowing and willing in such a way that the Christian operates on an epistemic plane superior to that of other men.

While rightly ordered *amor concupiscentiae* is a great good, we have concentrated in this section on disordered *amor concupiscentiae* which possesses the capacity to resist and to undermine the judgment of reason in order to throw light on the positive epistemic import of charity. Rectification of disordered desires by the political rule of reason informed by faith and charity brings about a certain intellectual enlightenment. To be ruled by concupiscence is to remain locked up within one's own horizons of egocentric concerns. This state of affairs clouds intellectual judgment. In contrast, the degree of one's intellectual illumination is linked to the extent to which one overcomes egotistical concerns. This overcoming of egotistical concerns is likened to a going forth from oneself in ecstasy. There obtains a kind of law of conservation of spiritual energy: the more one goes forth according to the ecstasy of charity, the less spiritual energy is available to enable disordered desire to flourish. Beginners are concerned with resisting concupiscences which battle against charity and so in their case

⁹⁷ Pinckaers, *La vie selon l'Esprit*, p. 199: “On peut la caractériser par l'action prédominante des dons du Saint-Esprit qui nous disposent à recevoir ses impulsions et à agir avec une perfection qui dépasse la mesure de la simple raison, comme quand on est porté par une inspiration spéciale vers la pauvreté, la chasteté ou le pardon, ainsi que le montre l'interprétation des béatitudes par S. Thomas (Ia IIae qu. 69, a. 3).”

charity has to be cultivated. Proficients aim to make progress in good and to strengthen their charity. The perfect experience an overriding desire to be free from egocentrism and from attachment to finite goods in order to be united with Christ.

In Christ the Word, God's eternal concept of Wisdom, has assumed human nature. Hence Christ is both the Way to the fulfilment of our desire for Truth and the destination of that desire. Once again we must underline the epistemic significance of the *imitatio Christi*: it ultimately brings the believer to a comprehension of things that surpass the life of sense and reason. This kind of knowledge constitutes the highest realization of the experimental knowledge that accompanies the mission of the Holy Spirit. Throughout all the three stages of charity the Holy Spirit bestows a "sympathy or connaturality for Divine things,"⁹⁸ on the basis of which reason can judge correctly about the things of God and, in the light of these divine things, of human acts. This kind of judgment pertains to the Gift of wisdom. We therefore pass on to a consideration of Thomas's treatment of this Gift in order to gain further insights into the epistemic significance of faith and charity.

In the first instance it is important to establish that the Gift of wisdom is the fruit of the activity of the Trinity in the economy of salvation. Wisdom refers to the judgment of all things in the light of God as highest cause and is imparted by the Holy Spirit. This understanding is attested to in Scripture and it is the sacred text that once again inspires and guides Thomas's speculations concerning this Gift. Wisdom also has a Christological impress since, while its cause – namely charity – is in the will, its essence is in the intellect, whose act is to judge correctly.⁹⁹ The Word assimilates the human intellect to Himself by means of His invisible mission, which assimilation entails on the part of the Christian "a certain

⁹⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: "[C]ompassio sive connaturalitas ad res divina."

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*: "[S]apientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem, sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare"

experimental knowledge; and this is properly called wisdom (*sapientia*), as it were a sweet knowledge (*sapida scientia*).”¹⁰⁰

3. The Gift of wisdom: the invisible mission of the Son

At the outset it is necessary to be clear that wisdom, like all the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit, is not the preserve of the spiritual elite. It is in fact necessary for salvation and, as such, is possessed by all who have charity and are without mortal sin.¹⁰¹ Just as nature does not fail in necessities, neither does grace. Human reason is perfected in two ways: firstly, by the light of natural reason in accordance with its natural perfection; secondly, by the theological virtues with regard to its supernatural perfection. Although supernatural perfection is of course more perfect than natural perfection, we nevertheless possess the latter in a more perfect manner than the former because we possess the latter fully whereas we possess the former imperfectly, “since we know and love God imperfectly.”¹⁰² Anything that possesses a nature or a form or a virtue perfectly does not require external assistance in order to operate according to them – allowing of course for the fact that God works interiorly within every nature and every will; it can work of itself according to its nature or form or virtue. In contrast, that which possesses a nature or form or virtue imperfectly requires to be moved by another since it cannot work of itself. As a concrete illustration of this point, Thomas offers the analogy of a physician who can work by himself since he knows the medical art perfectly. His student, however, “who is not yet fully instructed, cannot work by

¹⁰⁰ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: “[P]erceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat. Et haec proprie dicitur sapientia, quasi sapida scientia.”

¹⁰¹ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 5 sed contra: “[I]n omnibus habentibus gratiam, sine peccato mortali existentibus, est sapientia.” See also *STh* I-II, q. 45 a. 2.

¹⁰² *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 2: “[I]mperfecte enim diligimus et cognoscimus Deum.”

himself, but needs to receive instructions from him.”¹⁰³ While it is possible for human beings to direct themselves to their connatural end through the judgment of reason, the motion of reason – albeit informed by the theological virtues – does not suffice to direct them to the supernatural end for the reason already cited: we possess the theological virtues imperfectly and they therefore need to be moved by the Holy Spirit. In other words, in order to achieve his supernatural end, “it is necessary for man to have the gift of the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰⁴

Thomas explains the necessity for the Gifts of the Holy Spirit by way of analogy with the moral virtues. Just as the moral virtues perfect the appetitive powers, bringing them to a greater participation in reason and thereby disposing them to obey reason more promptly, so too “the gifts of the Holy Ghost are habits whereby man is perfected to obey readily the Holy Ghost.”¹⁰⁵ Employing this analogy further in order to explicate the nature of the gifts, Thomas writes:

Now just as it is natural for the appetitive powers to be moved by the command of reason, so it is natural for all the forces in man to be moved by the instinct of God, as by a superior power. Therefore whatever powers in man can be the principles of human actions, can also be the subjects of gifts, even as they are virtues; and such powers are the reason and appetite.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Ibid.: “[D]iscipulus eius, qui nondum est plene instructus, non potest per se operari, nisi ab eo instruatur.”

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.: “[N]ecessarium est homini habere donum spiritus sancti.”

¹⁰⁵ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 3: “[D]ona spiritus sancti sunt quidam habitus, quibus homo perficitur ad prompte obediendum spiritui sancto.”

¹⁰⁶ *STh* I-II, q. 68 a. 4: “Sicut autem vires appetitivae natae sunt moveri per imperium rationis, ita omnes vires humanae natae sunt moveri per instinctum Dei, sicut a quadam superiori potentia. Et ideo in omnibus viribus hominis quae possunt esse principia humanorum actuum, sicut sunt virtutes, ita etiam sunt dona, scilicet in ratione, et in vi appetitiva.”

In explicating why wisdom is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, Thomas draws upon Aristotle's observation in his *Metaphysics* that "it belongs to wisdom to consider the highest cause,"¹⁰⁷ in the light of which it forms a most certain judgment concerning other causes and according to which it ought to order all things. The notion "highest cause" can be understood in two ways. Firstly, one can understand it as applying to a particular genus. Thus, when a person knows the highest cause in a particular genus, he is able to judge and to establish order among all the things that belong to that genus. Such a person "is said to be wise in that genus, for instance in medicine or architecture."¹⁰⁸ Secondly, one can understand the notion of "highest cause" simply. In this case, "he who knows the cause that is simply the highest, which is God, is said to be wise simply, because he is able to judge and set in order all things according to Divine rules."¹⁰⁹ Of course, this assertion does not mean that the person who is wise simply can *ipso facto* render judgment in matters medical, architectural, and so on. We are dealing here with the capacity to order the unfolding of one's life in the light of God as one's ultimate Beatitude.

While Thomas cites Aristotle in his deliberations concerning wisdom, his guiding light is Scripture when it comes to the wisdom that is a Gift of the Holy Spirit. When one searches Scripture one finds that judgment of all things in the light of God as highest cause is imparted by the Holy Spirit. Thus, "according to 1 Cor. ii. 15: *The spiritual man judgeth all things*, because as stated in the same chapter (verse 10), *the Spirit searcheth all things, yea*

¹⁰⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 1: "[A]d sapientem pertinet considerare causam altissimam."

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*: "[D]icitur esse sapiens in illo genere, ut in medicina vel architectura"

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*: "Ille autem qui cognoscit causam altissimam simpliciter, quae est Deus, dicitur sapiens simpliciter, in quantum per regulas divinas omnia potest iudicare et ordinare."

the deep things of God.”¹¹⁰ In his commentary on 1 Cor 2:15, Thomas writes that “in all matters a person who is sound has a sound judgment regarding individual cases; whereas a person who is unsound in any way fails in his judgements.”¹¹¹ Appeal to natural experience bears out this point. Thus, for example, someone who is awake can make a sound judgment concerning the fact that he himself is awake and that someone else is asleep whereas the one who is asleep enjoys right judgment concerning neither himself nor anyone who is awake. Thomas offers other analogies taken from the natural plane and which pertain to judgments of taste, weight, and morals: the judgment of a healthy individual about taste trumps that of someone who is sick, that of a strong man with regard to weight clearly excels that of a weak man, and a virtuous person’s judgment in moral matters is superior to that of a vicious person. With regard to the example drawn from the realm of morals Thomas cites Aristotle to the effect that “the virtuous man is the rule and standard of all human acts, because in all human affairs particular acts are such as a virtuous man judges them to be.”¹¹² In the light of these natural analogies, the notion of the spiritual man judging all things and being judged by no one becomes more readily intelligible. Thus, writes Thomas:

[T]he Apostle says ... that the spiritual man judges all things, namely, because a man with an intellect enlightened by the Holy Spirit and set in good order by Him has a sound judgment about the particulars which pertain to salvation. But a person who is

¹¹⁰ Ibid.: “[S]ecundum illud I ad Cor. II, *spiritualis iudicat omnia*; quia, sicut ibidem dicitur, *spiritus omnia scrutatur, etiam profunda Dei*.”

¹¹¹ *Ad 1 Cor II*, lectio 3 [118]: “[I]n omnibus ille qui recte se habet, rectum iudicium habet circa singula. Ille autem qui in se rectitudinis defectum patitur, deficit etiam in iudicando.”

¹¹² Ibid.: “[P]hilosophus dicit in V Ethicorum quod virtuosus est regula et mensura omnium humanorum, quia scilicet in rebus humanis talia sunt singularia, qualia virtuosus iudicat ea esse.”

not spiritual has his intellect darkened and his will disarranged, as far as spiritual goods are concerned. Consequently, the spiritual man cannot be judged by a man who is not spiritual any more than a man who is awake by one who is asleep. Therefore, Wis (3:8) speaking about the first group says that “the just shall judge all nations,” and below (4:3) the Apostle, speaking about the second group says: “With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court”.¹¹³

With regard to the deep things of God that the Spirit searches (1 Cor 2:15), we have already seen that Thomas regards these as being hidden in God Himself and not knowable by means of His creatures.¹¹⁴ Thomas explains that the Holy Spirit searches these deep things “not as though He learns them by searching them out, but because He knows fully even the most intimate details of all things.”¹¹⁵ The love of charity transports the believer into these intimate depths of the inscrutable knowledge of the Trinitarian God.

The sixth article of *STh* II-II, q. 45 bears a certain similarity to the first, which we have just examined, inasmuch as the Aristotelian notion that “it belongs to wisdom to set

¹¹³ Ibid.: “[S]ecundum hunc modum apostolus ... dicit quod *spiritualis iudicat omnia*, quia scilicet homo habens intellectum illustratum et affectum ordinatum per spiritum sanctum, de singulis quae pertinent ad salutem, rectum iudicium habet. Ille autem qui non est spiritualis habet etiam intellectum obscuratum et affectum inordinatum circa spiritualia bona, et ideo ab homine non spirituali, spiritualis homo iudicari non potest, sicut nec vigilans a dormiente. Quantum ergo ad primum horum dicitur Sap. III, 8 quod *iudicabunt iusti nationes*. Quantum ad secundum dicitur infra IV, 3: *mihi pro minimo est, ut a vobis iudicer, aut ab humano die*.”

¹¹⁴ Ibid., lectio II [102]: “Dicuntur autem profunda ea quae in ipso latent, et non ea quae de ipso per creaturas cognoscuntur.”

¹¹⁵ Ibid.: “Quod non est sic intelligendum, quasi inquirendo quomodo fiant, sed quia perfecte et etiam intima quarumlibet rerum novit”

things in order”¹¹⁶ appears. Thomas employs the notion of setting things in order to link the Gift of wisdom with the seventh Beatitude: “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*”¹¹⁷ Indeed, the link is with both the merit (“Blessed are the peacemakers”) and the reward (“they shall be called the children of God”). Thomas’s definition of peacemakers as those who make peace either in themselves or in others is immediately obvious and uncontroversial. Not so obvious is that “in both cases this is the result of setting in due order those things in which peace is established.”¹¹⁸ The inspiration for this idea is St. Augustine who writes in *De Civitate Dei* that “peace is the tranquillity of order.”¹¹⁹ The first article in a question dedicated to a discussion of peace clarifies further what is meant by “tranquillity of order.” In brief, “it consists in all the appetitive movements in one man being set at rest together.”¹²⁰ For all the appetitive movements in one man to be set at rest together it is necessary in the first instance that the sensitive appetite tend to whatever is in agreement with the rational appetite. Secondly, if the same appetitive power seeks diverse objects which cannot all be attained at the same time, the movements of the appetite will lack union and the individual involved will therefore lack peace. The union of these appetites is necessary for peace. While it is possible to have a union of appetites among

¹¹⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6: “Ordinare autem pertinet ad sapientiam.”

¹¹⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6 *obj.* 1: “[B]eati pacifici, quoniam filii Dei vocabuntur.”

¹¹⁸ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6: “Quorum utrumque contingit per hoc quod ea in quibus pax constituitur ad debitum ordinem rediguntur.”

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*: “[P]ax est tranquillitas ordinis, ut Augustinus dicit, XIX de Civ. Dei.”

¹²⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 29 a.1 ad 1: “Quae quidem tranquillitas consistit in hoc quod omnes motus appetitivi in uno homine conquiescunt.”

various persons, this union will not constitute peace but rather concord unless there obtains a “union of the appetites even in one man.”¹²¹

Peace is the proper effect of charity, that is to say, of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit by grace. It therefore results from loving God with all one’s heart and by referring all things to Him as well as loving our neighbour as ourselves.¹²² With the idea of ordering all finite goods with reference to God as our ultimate end, we encounter again the theme of the necessity of achieving a right ordering in our desires. Rightly ordered desire is a function of charity and peace results from it. As the “tranquillity of order,” therefore, “peacableness is fittingly ascribed to wisdom.”¹²³

Thomas next turns to the reward expressed in the seventh Beatitude, namely “*they shall be called the children of God*.”¹²⁴ He then takes a Christological step, which is quite fitting when we consider that while “it has its cause in the will, which cause is charity,” wisdom “has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright.”¹²⁵ As Thomas writes in the question on the divine missions in the *Prima Pars*, “some gifts ... by reason of their own particular nature, are appropriated in a certain way to the Son, those, namely, which belong to the intellect, and in respect of which we speak of the mission of the Son.”¹²⁶ Wisdom is numbered among those Gifts and likens the soul to the Son. It is occasioned by the Son’s

¹²¹ *STh* II-II, q. 29 a.1: “[C]oncordia importat unionem appetituum diversorum appetentium, pax autem, supra hanc unionem, importat etiam appetituum unius appetentis unionem.”

¹²² See *STh* II-II, q. 29 a.2.

¹²³ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6: “[E]sse pacificum convenienter attribuitur sapientiae.”

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*: “[F]ilii Dei vocabuntur.”

¹²⁵ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: “[S]apientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem, sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare”

¹²⁶ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 1: “[A]liqua tamen dona, secundum proprias rationes, attribuuntur per quamdam appropriationem filio, scilicet illa quae pertinent ad intellectum et secundum illa dona attenditur missio filii.”

mission and occurs by way of knowledge and perception: “Thus Augustine plainly says (*De Trin.* iv. 20): *The Son is sent, whenever He is known and perceived by anyone.*”¹²⁷ This perception implies wisdom, which is described by Thomas as “a certain experimental knowledge.”¹²⁸ We have seen how experimental or affective knowledge affords the Christian “the taste of God’s sweetness, and complacency in God’s will”¹²⁹ and how Thomas offers Scriptural warrant for this idea. It is this kind of affective or experimental knowledge that is to be understood at *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6 when Thomas talks about the children of God participating in “the likeness of the only-begotten and natural Son of God.”¹³⁰

Thomas equates participation in “the likeness of the only-begotten and natural Son of God” with being made conformable to the image of the Son when he writes: “Now men are called the children of God in so far as they participate in the likeness of the only-begotten and natural Son of God, according to Rom. viii. 29, *Whom He foreknew . . . to be made conformable to the image of His Son, Who is Wisdom Begotten.*”¹³¹ The original Scriptural text mentions not only divine foreknowledge but also predestination. Thomas clearly wishes to bracket consideration of the latter. According to his analysis of this verse in his commentary on St. Paul’s letter to the Romans, foreknowledge simply implies knowledge of future things. The future things in question in this context concern the conformation of

¹²⁷ *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: “[S]ignanter dicit Augustinus quod filius mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur.”

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*: “[P]erceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat.”

¹²⁹ *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 ad 2: “Alia autem est cognitio divinae bonitatis seu voluntatis affectiva seu experimentalis, dum quis experitur in seipso gustum divinae dulcedinis et complacentiam divinae voluntatis.”

¹³⁰ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 6: “Dicuntur autem aliqui filii Dei inquantum participant similitudinem filii unigeniti et naturalis.”

¹³¹ *Ibid.*: “Dicuntur autem aliqui filii Dei inquantum participant similitudinem filii unigeniti et naturalis, secundum illud Rom. VIII, *quos praescivit conformes fieri imaginis filii sui*, qui quidem est sapientia genita.”

believers to the image of the Son, which conformation is at once to be adopted as children of God.¹³² To be conformed to the Son means to share in His inheritance. It also means to share in His splendour – as we read in Heb 1:3, the Son was born of the Father as the splendour of His glory. Thomas equates sharing in the Son’s splendour with being enlightened by the light of His Wisdom and grace by which he conforms us to Himself.¹³³ The Father’s eternal utterance of the Word is communicated to us by the Holy Spirit in the Gift of wisdom and by this Gift we attain to the sonship of God and are conformed to the image of His Son.

To be conformed to the image of the Son is the same as to be conformed to the Trinitarian dynamics of knowing and loving. We can also talk in terms of divinization. The next section considers this divinization of the believer with due regard to its epistemic or hermeneutical implications. In this regard it aims to bring out the properly intellectual character of the Gift of wisdom, which character pertains to the intellect in both its speculative and its practical modes. Under the influence of the Pseudo-Dionysius’s *De Divinibus Nominibus*, Thomas speaks of a ‘sympathy’ or ‘connaturality’ with divine things that result from charity. Recourse to Thomas’s commentary on the *De Divinibus Nominibus* provides further evidence of the apparent folly of divine Wisdom when compared with worldly ways of thinking. Charity in effect carries the intellect into the heart of the Trinitarian dynamics of knowing and willing. The understanding of reality that results is enlightened by Truth itself and lies beyond the comprehension of those who are immersed in worldly concerns. One could well describe the hermeneutical vision that is imparted as a sapiential.

¹³² *Ad Rom* VIII, lectio VI [704]: “Nihil enim aliud est adoptio filiorum quam illa conformitas. Ille enim qui adoptatur in filium Dei, conformatur vero filio eius.”

¹³³ *Ibid.*: “Ipse enim est genitus a patre tamquam splendor gloriae eius, Hebr. I, v. 3. Unde per hoc quod sanctos illuminat de lumine sapientiae et gratiae, facit eos fieri conformes sibi.”

In what follows, it ought not to be forgotten that the Incarnation is the indispensable condition for the attainment of a wisdom that transcends purely human wisdom. This present section has shown that for Thomas our filial adoption by virtue of the Incarnation is the condition for our participation in divine Wisdom. Just as the Son communicates the Holy Spirit to us, so too the Holy Spirit conforms us to the Word Who is the concept of God's Wisdom.

4. A sapiential hermeneutics

At *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2, Thomas asks whether wisdom resides in the intellect as in its subject. In this respect, he distinguishes between two different kinds of judgment. The first kind of judgment follows the perfect use of reason while the second regards “a certain connaturality with the matter about which one has to judge.”¹³⁴ Thomas explains this distinction with the example of chastity: while one can make a judgment about matters of chastity after a process of rational enquiry, a habitually chaste person can judge such matters “by a kind of connaturality.”¹³⁵ Rziha offers the concrete illustration of a man faced with the possibility of adultery. While, by a process of reasoning, he could conclude that it is wrong, “if the man already possessed the virtue of chastity, he would automatically flee from the situation on account of having trained the concupiscible appetite to act reasonably.”¹³⁶ The natural analogue concerning chastity serves to elucidate the difference between the intellectual virtue of wisdom and the Gift of wisdom in pronouncing judgment about divine things. When it comes to matters that concern God, it is possible for the intellectual virtue of wisdom to pronounce right judgment thereon after one has engaged in rational enquiry. The

¹³⁴ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: “[C]onnaturalitatem quandam ad ea de quibus iam est iudicandum.”

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*: “[P]er quandam connaturalitatem.”

¹³⁶ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, pp. 251-52, n. 190.

Gift of wisdom, in contrast, judges correctly about divine things on account of being connatured with them. The influence of the Pseudo-Dionysius on Thomas's thinking is once again in evidence: Thomas quotes Dionysius who tells us that "*Hierotheus is perfect in Divine things, for he not only learns, but is patient of, Divine things.*"¹³⁷ As already indicated, "this sympathy or connaturality for Divine things is the result of charity, which unites us to God, according to 1 Cor. vi. 17: *He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.*"¹³⁸ In other words, charity is the cause of the judgment that is proper to the Gift of wisdom. Charity, of course, perfects the will, while judgment is an act of the intellect. Hence, "wisdom which is a gift, has its cause in the will, which cause is charity, but it has its essence in the intellect, whose act is to judge aright."¹³⁹

Since the judgment proper to the Gift of wisdom has its essence in the intellect – as also that knowledge through connaturality which is proper to the power of natural judgment – it possesses a properly intellectual character. Of course, it does not involve concepts and is not discursive in nature. In this regard, Taki Suto argues that "connatural knowledge can be characterized as noninferential since it is contrasted with "the perfect use of reason" or "inquiry by reason."¹⁴⁰ As the term affective knowledge (*cognitio affectiva*)¹⁴¹ suggests,

¹³⁷ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: "*Hierotheus est perfectus in divinis non solum discens, sed et patiens divina.*" Quotation from *De Div. Nom.*, c. 2.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* : "*Huiusmodi autem compassio sive connaturalitas ad res divinas fit per caritatem, quae quidem unit nos Deo, secundum illud I ad Cor. VI, qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est.*"

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*: "[S]apientia quae est donum causam quidem habet in voluntate, scilicet caritatem, sed essentiam habet in intellectu, cuius actus est recte iudicare."

¹⁴⁰ Taki Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *Review of Metaphysics* 58 (2004), p. 63.

¹⁴¹ See *STh* I, q. 64 a. 1: "[D]uplex est cognitio veritatis, una quidem quae habetur per gratiam; alia vero quae habetur per naturam. Et ista quae habetur per gratiam, est duplex, una quae est speculativa tantum, sicut cum

however, wisdom nevertheless has an intellectual character. It is by virtue of its affective character that this knowledge which is possessed by grace is properly speaking wisdom. Intellectual judgment is effected immediately (that is to say, without the mediation of concepts) on the basis of affective inclination. Such judgment does not regard speculative matters only but also practical matters. Appealing to Augustine, Thomas informs us that wisdom pertains to the higher part of reason and that the higher reason “*is intent on the consideration and consultation of the heavenly, i.e., Divine, types,*”¹⁴² that is to say, the divine ideas insofar as they are principles of knowledge.¹⁴³ To consider the divine types means to contemplate divine things in themselves whereas to consult them entails judging human acts in their light and to direct them according to divine rules. Since God affords us a knowledge of Himself through faith, faith can be said to consider divine things in themselves. As Rziha correctly observes, therefore, “wisdom allows humans to receive the conclusions (both speculative and practical) from these principles [of faith] immediately”¹⁴⁴ even when, in the realm of practical decision-making, they are not in possession of all the relevant

alicui aliqua secreta divinatorum revelantur; alia vero quae est affectiva, producat amorem Dei; et haec proprie pertinet ad donum sapientiae.” See also *STh* II-II, q. 97 a. 2 ad 2; *STh* II-II, q. 162 a. 3 ad 1.

¹⁴² *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 3: “[I]ntendit rationibus supernis, scilicet divinis, et conspiciendis et consulendis.”

¹⁴³ See *STh* I, q. 15 a. 3: “[C]um ideae a Platone ponerentur principia cognitionis rerum et generationis ipsarum, ad utrumque se habet idea, prout in mente divina ponitur. Et secundum quod est principium factionis rerum, exemplar dici potest, et ad practicam cognitionem pertinet. Secundum autem quod principium cognoscitivum est, proprie dicitur ratio; et potest etiam ad scientiam speculativam pertinere. Secundum ergo quod exemplar est, secundum hoc se habet ad omnia quae a Deo fiunt secundum aliquod tempus. Secundum vero quod principium cognoscitivum est, se habet ad omnia quae cognoscuntur a Deo, etiam si nullo tempore fiant; et ad omnia quae a Deo cognoscuntur secundum propriam rationem, et secundum quod cognoscuntur ab ipso per modum speculationis.”

¹⁴⁴ Rziha, *Perfecting Human Actions*, p. 252.

information. In this regard, Rziha avers, “Wisdom gives them the ability to judge in accord with the eternal law even when they do not know all of the premises, so that their actions are not only formally in conformity with the divine will, but also materially in conformity.”¹⁴⁵

This ability to judge by a connaturality with divine things has, to labour the point, charity as its cause. Since charity is the cause of the Gift of wisdom and since by this Gift we are able to make moral judgments in accordance with the divine will, it follows that the more deeply we enter into God’s goodness by way of the union of charity, the more our moral vision is illumined by God’s very own goodness so that our moral judgments reflect ever more and more the divine will. As we have seen, the basis of our friendship with God is God’s communication of His Beatitude in the Incarnation of Christ. Friendship also requires mutuality since “friendship is between friend and friend.”¹⁴⁶ The depth of friendship we enjoy with God is therefore contingent upon the degree to which we respond to the divine communication by conforming our knowing and loving to the teaching and example of Christ. This knowing and loving, as has been argued, will necessarily bear a sacrificial character.

The Cross of Christ and its epistemic significance are present throughout the Christian life. As Bruce D. Marshall writes, “For Thomas ... it seems that if “the salvation accomplished by the cross of Christ” is the “chief matter” of the Christian faith, it must turn out epistemically to be the chief matter across the board.”¹⁴⁷ While present throughout the Christian life, however, the mark of the Cross of Christ arguably becomes more accentuated as one ascends the degrees of the Gift of wisdom, for serious Christians can all too often

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 254.

¹⁴⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 23 a. 1: “[A]micus est amico amicus.” See *In Ethic* 8, l. 2 [1559].

¹⁴⁷ Bruce D. Marshall, “Faith and Reason Reconsidered: Aquinas and Luther on Deciding What is True,” *The Thomist* 63 (1999), p. 21.

appear mad to those around them. Thomas makes this point most forcefully when commenting directly on the *De Divinis Nominibus* of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Given the influence of the Pseudo-Dionysius on Thomas's thinking about wisdom as "a certain experimental knowledge"¹⁴⁸ that one learns through suffering divine things,¹⁴⁹ it seems reasonable to turn to Thomas's more systematic engagement with this thinker in his commentary on the *De Divinis Nominibus*. It will become evident that Thomas's thinking proves to be consistent with what he writes at *STh* III, q. 3 a. 8 as well as with his reflections on the third degree of charity.¹⁵⁰

Paraphrasing Dionysius, Thomas writes that "the divine wisdom is *more highly praised* as irrational, inasmuch as it exceeds reason; and as mad, inasmuch as it exceeds the mind or intellect; and as foolish, in as much as it exceeds the habit of mind, namely wisdom."¹⁵¹ One should not of course over-interpret this text since Thomas interprets Dionysius's negations in terms of 'supereminences.' Consequently, although divine wisdom does indeed exceed human wisdom, it does not contradict it. It nevertheless also remains true that God transcends the conditions of corporeal being and it is therefore beyond the capacity of human reason to know Him as He is in himself according to its own mode of cognition.

¹⁴⁸ See *STh* I, q. 43 a. 5 ad 2: "[P]erceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat. Et haec proprie dicitur sapientia, quasi sapida scientia."

¹⁴⁹ See *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: "Hierotheus est perfectus in divinis *non solum discens, sed et patiens divina*." Quotation from *De Div Nom* c. 2.

¹⁵⁰ See chapter IV, section 1 and chapter IX, section 2 respectively.

¹⁵¹ In *De Div Nom* c. 7, lectio 2 [708]: "Recolligit ergo primo excessum divinae sapientiae dicens quod divina sapientia laudatur excellenter sicut irrationabilis, inquantum excedit rationem; et sicut amens, inquantum excedit mentem sive intellectum; et sicut stulta, inquantum excedit habitum mentis, scilicet sapientiam." Translation by Peter A. "'Divine Drunkenness': The Secret Life of Thomistic Reason," *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2004), p. 8.

Borne by the ecstasy of charity into communion with the Trinitarian God, therefore, reason that knows by faith is itself rendered ecstatic. In other words, the Gift of wisdom renders human reason ecstatic as Thomas himself maintains in commenting on truth and faith as joined to wisdom:

He who by faith is united to the truth knows well how well it is for him, by thus adhering to the truth of the faith, even though many reproach him as having suffered ecstasy, that is to say, as a fool and alienated from himself. On account of their errors it is indeed hidden from those who reproach him that he has, without doubt, by the truth of faith suffered the ecstasy of truth, placed as it were outside all sense and conjoined to supernatural truths.¹⁵²

In contrast to his detractors, the believer “knows within himself that he is not insane, as they say he is, but he is liberated by the simple truth which always remains in the same way, so that he is not tossed about by the unstable and changeable winds of different errors.”¹⁵³ Insofar as human reason is not borne beyond its own limits by charity it seeks to know divine things according to its own mode of cognition by “gathering truth from the senses.”¹⁵⁴ It consequently ends up confusing knowledge of divine things with knowledge of

¹⁵² *In De Div Nom* c. 7, lectio 5 [739]: “Ille enim qui veritati per fidem unitus est, bene cognoscit quam bene sit ei, sic veritati fidei adhaerendo; *quamvis multi reprehendant ipsum sicut extasim passum*, idest sicut fatuum et a se alienatum; etenim *latet ipsos reprehendentes ex eorum errore*, quod ipse sine dubio *per veram fidem est passus extasim veritatis*, quasi extra omnem sensum positus et *veritati* supernaturali coniunctus.”

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*: “[I]pse credens novit de seipso quod non est furens, ut ipsi *dicunt*, sed est liberatus *per veritatem simplicem et semper eodem modo se habentem*, ne circumferatur per instabiles et variabiles ventos diversorum errorum.”

¹⁵⁴ *In De Div Nom* c. 7, lectio 1 [704]: “[A] sensibilibus veritatem colligens.”

finite, created, things. Insofar as reason depends on its own powers and remains at the level of sense knowledge, it can only be deceived with regard to knowledge of divine things. This point is in no way meant to denigrate the importance, indeed the necessity, of sense knowledge: the most exalted natural knowledge of God has its roots in sense knowledge as also the knowledge of God that we receive by revelation. The whole point about *cognitio affectiva* is that it engages the whole person as psychosomatically constituted since affectivity is rooted in the somatic aspect of the person. And yet such knowledge would not be possible without the ecstatic impulse of charity as Thomas describes it. Thomas is no Buddhist mystic. His mystical theology, if one be allowed to describe it as such, is grounded in a robust hylomorphic anthropology. The point we simply wish to make here is well expressed by Brian Shanley, O.P.:

By the gracious indwelling of the Trinity we attain a new perspective that is not a disinterested speculative shift, but rather a complete reorientation of emotions and experience because the knowledge involved is affective, *per modum inclinationis*; it is a *notitia experimentalis*, a *verbum spirans amorem*. It is knowledge by sympathy, familiarity, affinity, instinct, and assimilation; it is the knowledge of a mind in love.¹⁵⁵

Wisdom, like the other Gifts of the Holy Spirit, is necessary for salvation. The one who is wise by that wisdom which is the Gift of the Holy Spirit considers the first cause of all that exists simply speaking, namely God, and both judges and sets in order all things according to the divine rules. The Gift of wisdom differs from faith – on which it depends – in that while faith assents to the divine Truth, wisdom judges according to this Truth. This

¹⁵⁵ Brian Shanley, O.P., *Sacra Doctrina and the Theology of Disclosure*,” *The Thomist* 61 (1997), p. 182.

judgment is effected through a certain connaturality with divine things. This judgment through connaturality is explicated by Thomas by an analogue from the realm of virtue, namely the judgment about matters pertaining to chastity made by a person who is chaste as distinct from the judgment made by one who is competent in the rational enquiry proper to ethics but who is not chaste. Wisdom or connaturality with divine things is caused by charity, which perfects the will, while it has its essence in the intellect whose act is to judge correctly. Hence, although wisdom is characterized as affective knowledge (*cognitio affectiva*) and although it does not involve concepts and is not discursive, it is nonetheless also intellectual in character. The judgment of wisdom pertains both to speculative and practical matters. It yields conclusions from the principles of faith, conclusions that accord with the divine will, even though the possessor of this Gift does not possess all the relevant data. Since charity is the cause of wisdom, the more one is united with God by charity the more one's moral perceptions and judgments accord with God's will. This wisdom, which renders human reason ecstatic, inevitably appears as foolishness to those whose reason is not borne beyond its natural limitations by charity and whose judgments are governed simply by the life of sense.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has argued on the basis of the dynamics of reciprocal influence that characterize the relationship between intellect and will that the greater the degree of charity with which the believer is blessed, the greater the degree of his intellectual enlightenment. This state of affairs is explained by the fact that charity is ecstatic in character since it not only impels its possessor outwards away from egocentric desires but draws the human intellect into the domain of God's own Wisdom. God's Wisdom of course transcends the limits of natural sense and reason but is received by us through faith in Christ in Whom

God's eternal concept of Wisdom assumed human nature. The epistemic import of the *imitatio Christi* bears repeating: it brings the disciple of Christ to a comprehension of things that surpass the confines of sense and reason. The Holy Spirit, Who communicates the fullness of the Son's nature to us, bestows this comprehension on us by means of the Gift of wisdom. By this Gift the Holy Spirit grants to all in the state of grace a "sympathy or connaturality for Divine things,"¹⁵⁶ which enables human reason to judge aright concerning the things of God and, in the light of divine things, to judge aright with regard to human acts.

Wisdom is caused by charity, which perfects the will, but has its essence in the intellect whose act is to judge aright. It is an affective knowledge (*cognitio affectiva*). As such it does not involve concepts nor is it discursive in nature. It nonetheless is intellectual in character since it judges aright about divine things and about human matters in the light of divine things. As already stated, wisdom has its essence in the intellect whose act is to judge correctly. The fact that wisdom is caused by charity means that increase in charity necessarily results in increased wisdom. In other words, it yields perceptions and judgments that accord ever more with the divine will. These perceptions and judgments seem to be utter folly to a worldly way of thinking so we once again encounter the reality of the cross at the heart of Christian knowing and willing. A hermeneutics of graced knowing and willing possesses a cruciform character. In this regard the conclusions of this chapter concur with our considerations of Thomas's Christology, discussed in chapter four. By the *imitatio Christi* the disciple enters ever more deeply into the triune God's infinite and inscrutable wisdom and participates analogically in it. By the imitation of Christ the disciple is assimilated to the divine Wisdom.

¹⁵⁶ *STh* II-II, q. 45 a. 2: "[C]ompassio sive connaturalitas ad res divina."

Notwithstanding this cruciform character that characterizes Christian wisdom, the life of faith and charity with their associated Gifts by which we are configured through the Holy Spirit to the eternal concept of Wisdom, furnishes the criterion for what we have in this work termed a hermeneutics of objectivity. In terms of the discussion of this chapter we can say that objectivity in judgments concerning reality and human conduct is directly related to the degree to which a person is animated by the Gift of wisdom. Appreciation of this conclusion requires an understanding of Thomas's doctrine concerning man as made to the image of the Trinity, his Trinitarian theology, his faculty psychology (in particular the interaction of intellect and will), his Christology, his theology of grace, and his treatment of faith and charity as well as his discussion of the Gifts of understanding, knowledge, counsel, and wisdom.

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

According to Thomas the *imago Dei* receives its greatest expression in the acts of knowing and loving God, acts that reflect the eternal processions of the Son as the Word of the Father, and of the Holy Spirit as the Love of the Father and Son. Indeed, in the human act of knowing God “the Word of God proceeds from knowledge about God.”¹ In other words, the human mind somehow participates in the processions of the divine Word and Love so that God can be said to proceed in the human mind through the assimilation caused by the objective presence of God to the human intellect and will. By grace our acts of knowing and willing share in God’s life and Beatitude. For Thomas, the human intellect and will are ontologically constituted in their relation to God, possessing, at the very least, the capacity to know and to love God, even if this capacity is not realized by grace. When realized by grace, intellect and will participate in the knowledge and love of the divine Persons by actually knowing and loving them. Construed Thomistically, therefore, there can be no such thing as ‘pure’ reason in the sense of reason that stands outside reality and judges it from a ‘detached’ and ‘neutral’ perspective.

The Incarnation of Christ furnishes humankind with the only means, proportioned to our human condition, by which we can gain an adequate knowledge of the goal of human existence and on the basis of which we can rightly order our willing. Among the reasons that Thomas offers for the fittingness of the Incarnation, the one emphasized in chapter four is Christ’s moral exemplarity. Christ’s humanity provides a ‘guiding hand’ (*manuductio*) both

¹ *STh* I, q. 93 a. 8 ad 1: “[V]erbum Dei procedit a notitia de Deo.”

to a knowledge and to a love of divine things.² It is the instrument by means of which God moves us towards union with Him in the beatific vision. Everything that Christ did and said in the flesh is imbued with salvific significance and, as such, provides *the* model for right knowing and willing: “Christ’s action is our instruction.”³ Christ, of course, differs from any other exemplar in that He is the Word of God made flesh. He is the revelation of God in human form, true God and true man. When, moved by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ’s instruction and imitate His words and deeds we thereby conform our knowing and willing to the Word, the concept of God’s eternal Wisdom, through Whom all things have been created. Given the unity of the Trinity of Persons in the one divine essence, the *imitatio Christi* thus entails conformation of one’s knowing and willing, in a mode proper to finite human being, to the divine mind.

In accordance with the logic of the Trinitarian processions, grace denotes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian: “[T]he Father spirates the Holy Ghost through the Son, or ... the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son, which has the same meaning.”⁴ Our filial adoption is possible because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ and both Persons share the same divine essence with the Father. By the grace of the Holy Spirit we are configured to Christ because the Holy Spirit receives the Son’s divine nature in its fullness. Indeed, again in accordance with the logic of the Trinitarian processions, the grace of the Holy Spirit conforms us to the Trinity itself since the Holy Spirit receives the fullness of the divine being from the Father through the Son. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit within us by grace brings about a transformation in our being: the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

² See *STh* II-II, q. 82 a. 3 ad 2.

³ *STh* III, q. 40 a. 1 ad 3: “Christi actio fuit nostra instructio.”

⁴ *STh* I, q. 36 a. 3: “[P]otest dici quod pater per filium spirat spiritum sanctum; vel quod spiritus sanctus procedat a patre per filium, quod idem est.”

establishes a certain likeness (*similitudo*) of God in the soul, a likeness that consists in the perfection of the image of God within us so that we can know and love God supernaturally. Indeed, the image of God in humans is realized and perfected inasmuch as the soul imitates God in the activities of knowing and loving God Himself.

Chapter six emphasized the centrality of the articles of faith which mediate divine realities to us in a mode that is proportioned to the structure of human cognition. The articles of the symbol bring us into spiritual contact with the realities to which they give linguistic expression. In this way, they in effect draw the human intellect beyond what it is capable of knowing by dint of its natural resources. In keeping with the limitations of human understanding, however, the implications of the articles of faith have been unfolded throughout the centuries, leading to an increase in the number of articles requiring explicit belief. Later ages believe explicitly what earlier ages held implicitly. In all these later articles of faith, the cognition of believers participates in and is assimilated to divine truth, “inasmuch as through the faith which is infused into our souls we adhere to the very First Truth on account of Itself.”⁵ In other words, our adherence to the material objects of the faith entails our participation in and assimilation to divine Truth inasmuch as we believe these material objects on account of the First Truth and, through this belief, cling to the First Truth. The articles of the faith function as supernatural principles of cognition, directing us towards God as our final Beatitude. In other words, they furnish basic self-evidences that establish a fundamental worldview in the light of which our knowledge of reality unfolds. As grounded in the articles of faith, one could argue that conclusions that flow therefrom as well as their embodiment in practical action and social structures also participate in the First Truth. Clearly, ethical practice and politics that flow from the principles of the Catholic faith differ

⁵ *Super De Trinitate*, I, q. 2 a. 2: “[I]n quantum per fidem nobis infusam inhaeremus ipsi primae veritati propter se ipsam.”

from forms of ethical practice and politics that have their origin in the principles of other worldviews.

The veracity of the articles of faith is vouchsafed by the authority of the Church, the Body of Christ, in whose ecclesial person members are united by faith. Faith therefore possesses an essentially ecclesial character. In terms both of the historical transmission and elucidation of the faith and of its hierarchical communication, the believer cannot escape the ecclesial nature of faith. The Church, since it is animated by the Holy Spirit, guarantees the veracity of the articles of faith, the very articles of faith that provide the principles for the rational deliberations of the believer. The ecclesial character of faith means that the immediate shaping influences on the believer's knowing and willing emanate from the ecclesial context in which he finds himself. This context is, as Rikhof points out, that of a historical community of faith (*congregatio fidelium*) "seen in the perspective of eternity due to the dynamics of faith, the *inchoatio beatitudinis*."⁶ (This community of faith, it should be noted, embraces the faith of the Old Testament, it is the *ecclesia ab Abel*.)⁷ Joseph Ratzinger gives expression to this idea in comments concerning infant baptism. Parents and friends speak for the infant at baptism and thus "hold in their hands not only its biological life but also its spiritual life." He continues:

The spiritual life of the child unfolds *within* the spiritual life of its parents and teachers. In a birth process that is much longer than the biological one, the child's spiritual existence grows in the bosom of parental thinking and willing until the child

⁶ Rikhof, "Thomas on the Church," p. 208.

⁷ For a summary treatment of this point, see *ibid*.

is eventually able to assume responsibility for itself. The “I” of the child is hidden in the “I” of the parents.⁸

As the child grows up or as the adult catechumen/newly baptized grows into the faith, the modes of knowing and willing proper to the community of faith condition his vision of reality – albeit in competition with other visions of reality vying for his attention, visions that are not illuminated by the light of faith.

This point is exemplified in our own time, for example, by the possibilities engendered by developments in biotechnology. These developments place demands on reason that were simply unknown even a few decades ago. While secular culture in the West has become increasingly what John Paul II famously describes in *Evangelium Vitae* as a culture of death, reason strengthened by the light of Catholic faith has steadfastly maintained the absolute dignity of the human person at all stages of life. In contrast to the culture of life that issues from reason that receives its directionality from seeking the Trinitarian God as its final end, purely secular reason divorced from faith unfolds in the direction of nihilism that negates the value even of the human person. Thus, John Paul II laments the tragedy of “*the eclipse of the sense of God and man*, typical of a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism.”⁹ He argues that a negative dynamic reciprocity obtains between the loss of a sense of God and the loss of a sense of man. Thus, a loss of the sense of God entails a tendency to lose the sense of man, a dynamic that expresses itself in a lack of regard for man’s dignity and even his life. By the same token, “the systematic violation of the moral law, especially in the serious matter of respect for human life and its dignity” constitutes the

⁸ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Principles of Catholic Theology: Building Stones for a Fundamental Theology*, trans. by Sister Mary Frances McCarthy, S.N.D. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), p. 42.

⁹ *Evangelium Vitae* (London: CatholicTruth Society, 1995), para. 21.

source of “a kind of progressive darkening of the capacity to discern God’s living and saving presence.”¹⁰ While the tenor of one’s moral life does indeed impinge upon the dynamics of the life of faith, we have been concerned in this study solely with the implications of living faith for the life of reason.

The deliberations of chapters four, six, seven, eight, and nine in particular help to explain why secular and Catholic interpretations of reality necessarily conflict with each other on many issues. The proper connatural context for the unfolding of the life of knowing and willing is in between the Trinitarian God as Creator of all that exists and the Trinitarian God as our final Beatitude. Insofar as a person’s intellect does not adhere to the Trinitarian God as the First Truth and the will seek Him as its ultimate Good, his capacity to know truth and to seek the true good are undermined: erroneous knowing begets distorted willing and *vice versa*, according to the dynamics of *circulatio* outlined in chapter three. The life of mind is darkened in such a way that error and vice are unavoidable. Insofar as knowing and willing are informed by living faith and charity, in contrast, their activity accords with the objective constitution of reality since they participate in the life of the Trinitarian God through Whose Word all things have been created. The hermeneutics of faith does not therefore furnish one perspective among many others; rather, as a participation in God’s Trinitarian life it is enlightened concerning the true nature of reality.

Although it would be perfectly possible to elaborate a purely philosophical participatory hermeneutics on the basis of an appeal to Thomas’s proofs for the existence of God and his account of the natural desire for Beatitude, Thomas’s intellectual corpus provides ample resources for the elaboration of an overtly theological hermeneutics, one predicated on the fact that we are made to the image of the Trinity and which is

¹⁰ Ibid.

Christological, Pneumatological, and Trinitarian in character.¹¹ Thomas's account of the dynamics of knowing and willing and his construal of the relationship between faith and reason (as well as charity and will) allow the elaboration of a hermeneutics that takes account of human situatedness in history while at the same time saving us from the ravages of relativism. While situated in history, reason is capable of universal truth, a point brought out forcefully in the proofs for the existence of God and Thomas's treatment of the divine attributes. Living faith, moreover, intensifies reason's metaphysical vision.

The love of friendship which is charity is integral to Thomas's hermeneutics of knowing and willing, not least because charity transcends the rule of reason. Charity surpasses human knowledge since it unites the believer with God as He is in Himself. Indeed, by the love of charity "the beloved is, in a manner, in the lover, and, again, the lover is drawn by desire to union with the beloved."¹² The intimate relationship of dynamic reciprocity that obtains between intellect and will means that the will transports intellect into an ineffable experience of the Trinitarian God Who infinitely transcends the capacity of the intellect to know Him. This experience yields an affective knowledge (*cognitio affectiva*) – a valid kind of knowledge albeit of a kind that lacks the clarity of conceptual knowledge. As Kwasniewski describes it, "it is human knowing in its highest assimilation to God short of the beatific vision, partaking therefore of his "inaccessible light" (1 Tim. 6:16)."¹³ The indwelling of the Holy Spirit by charity renders human reason truly ecstatic.

¹¹ For an elaboration of a philosophical hermeneutics that draws its inspiration from Thomas's work, see O'Reilly, "Transcending Gadamer," pp. 841-860

¹² *STh* I-II, q. 66 a. 6: "[E]st enim amatum quodammodo in amante, et etiam amans per affectum trahitur ad unionem amati."

¹³ Peter A. Kwasniewski, "Golden Straw: St. Thomas and the Ecstatic Practice of Theology," *Nova et Vetera* 2 (2004), p. 70.

Yet this ecstasy does not annul the nature of human reason; rather, it realizes the potential of reason to a degree inconceivable without the aid of grace. Thomas's conception of reason is brought out well by Pieper:

Reason includes a reference to reality; indeed, it is itself this reference. "In accord with reason" is in this sense that which is right "in itself," that which corresponds to reality itself ... [*R*]atio is not that reason which arbitrarily restricts itself to the province of purely natural cognition. *Ratio* here signifies – in its widest sense – man's power to grasp reality. Now man grasps reality not only in natural cognition but also – and this reality is a higher object of knowledge and the process of grasping it a higher process – by faith in the revelation of God. If therefore the *Summa Theologica* states that Christ is the chief Lord (*principalis Dominus*), the first owner of our bodies, and that one who uses his body in a manner contrary to order, injures Christ the Lord Himself, Thomas is not of the opinion that this proposition exceeds the pattern of "mere" rational order, but rather that for Christian thought to be guided by divine revelation is the very highest form of "accord with reason" – this in spite of the fact that elsewhere Thomas knows how to distinguish sharply between natural and supernatural cognition. "The order of reason," accordingly, is the order which corresponds to the reality made evident to man through faith and knowledge.¹⁴

The fact that Christian reason is rendered ecstatic on account of charity means that Christian wisdom necessarily differs from worldly wisdom since the Gift of Wisdom has its cause in charity while its essence resides in the intellect. The judgments effected under the inspiration

¹⁴ Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 156.

of the Gift of wisdom therefore enjoy a special divine illumination, the illumination afforded by graced participation in the divine life. It is reasonable to argue that the greater the degree of charity one possesses, the greater the degree to which one will be illumined by the divine light and, consequently, the greater will be one's wisdom.

The synthetic nature of the Christian life requires that the indispensable role of faith for the Gift of wisdom be emphasized. Thomas's reflection on the Gospel according to St. John taught him that "No one can arrive at any wisdom except by faith."¹⁵ Thomas clarifies by way of analogy with the intellectual virtue of wisdom. Thus, in the sciences, "no one acquires wisdom unless he first believes what is said by his teacher."¹⁶ The intellectual virtue of wisdom presupposes faith or trust in a human teacher. Analogously, if the human intellect is to be perfected by the Gift of divine Wisdom, "we must believe through faith the things that are proposed to us by it."¹⁷ Assent to matters of faith is of course by the light of faith bestowed by God on the believer. Here again, I would like to highlight the ecclesial character not only of faith and charity, which is shown its object by faith, but also of wisdom. Again, the logic is simple: the articles that we believe, we believe on the authority of the Church. It is on the basis of those things that are proposed to us for belief by the authority of the Church that we come to share in the Wisdom of God. Membership of the *congregatio fidelium* therefore furnishes an indispensable condition for the intellectual illumination afforded by the Gift of wisdom. In other words, instantiation within this historically situated community of faith which is at once the *corpus Christi* ensures the conditions for the kind of historically

¹⁵ *In Joh V*, lectio 4 [771]: "[A]d nullam sapientiam potest homo pervenire nisi per fidem"

¹⁶ *Ibid.*: "[N]ullus ad sapientiam pervenit, nisi prius fidem adhibeat dictis a magistro."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: "Si ergo nos volumus ad illam vitam sapientiae pervenire, oportet nos per fidem credere ea quae ab illa nobis proponuntur."

effected consciousness that, in turn, alone provides the conditions for the highest degree of objectivity in this life.

In brief, in delineating what we have termed the hermeneutics of knowing and willing in Thomas's thought, we have also shown forth the conditions that he considers to be necessary for objective judgment. If the argument of this work is correct, these conditions are Christological, Pneumatological, Trinitarian, and ecclesial. Throughout the course of our presentation of Thomas's thought, we have made a point of showing how his thinking about theological issues is profoundly shaped by reflection on the biblical text. In addition to the Christological, Pneumatological, Trinitarian, and ecclesial dynamics of Thomas's hermeneutics of knowing and willing, we must therefore also recognize their Scriptural character.

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